THE ENGLISH MADRIGAL

E. H. FELLOWES

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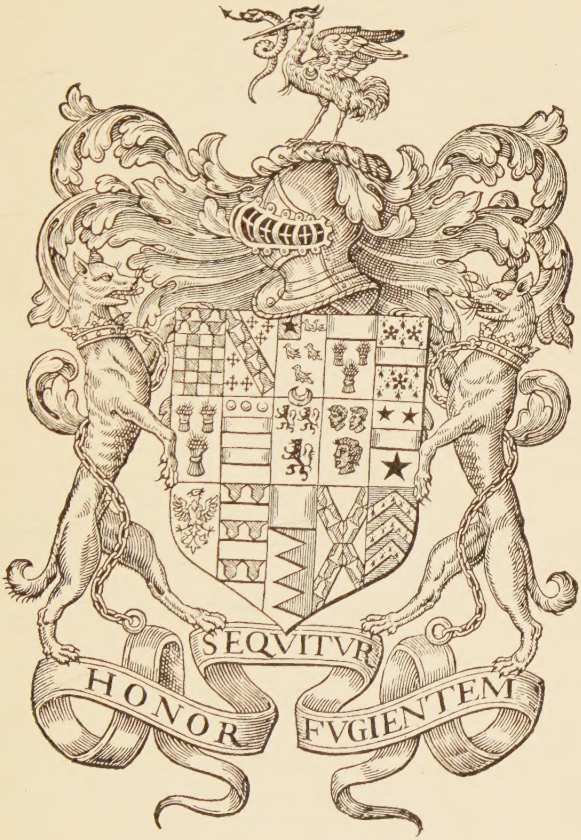

Coat of arms of Arthur, Lord Chichester,
printed in Bateson's *Second Set of Madrigals*, 1618
(see p. 48)

QUEEN ELIZABETH

From an engraving by Thomas Geminus, 1559

The English Madrigal

By

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I

Music in the Elizabethan Home

It is sometimes asserted that a piece of music cannot be properly appreciated unless the listener by an effort of imagination can picture to himself the surroundings and conditions in which it was composed and first performed. For example, there are those who consider that a string quartet by Haydn or Mozart will give the listener greater enjoyment if he can think of the music being performed in the late eighteenth century with its characteristic features of furniture and dress. It is an error to suppose that the actual merits of a musical composition are in any real sense dependent upon secondary conditions such as these. Opinions may differ about the relative value of the various factors which make for beauty and artistic merit in a piece of music, but if a composition belonging to any period has the inherent power to enable it to pass the prolonged tests of intelligent criticism and to establish its claim to be acknowledged as a work of Art in the true sense, it is entirely free from all considerations of date and from all other extraneous associations, nor does even its nationality, however strongly marked upon it, carry any weight in assessing its artistic value. For the purpose of artistic valuation it is just as little necessary to know the conditions in which a motet of Palestrina or of Byrd, or a fugue of Bach, or a symphony of Beethoven, was composed, as it is to be a creditable classical scholar in order to be capable of appreciating the masterpieces of Greek statuary.

On the other hand, it is true that music, in a greater degree perhaps than any of the other arts, not excepting even painting, carries with it the date of its composition, and in consequence

it must be admitted that it is helpful both to the performer and the listener to know approximately the date or at least the period to which a work belongs. And with the English madrigals it becomes a matter of legitimate interest to know something of the general conditions in which they were first produced.

The English madrigal was essentially the product of the English home. It is not always realized that in the sixteenth century, and for some time afterwards, there were no such things as public concerts; the performance of all secular music at that time was limited to the home and was private. Nor is it generally understood that before this period very little secular music of an organized kind, composed on an artistic and formal basis, had been produced at all. Not that there had been none; primitive man must have discovered that he had a singing voice as soon as he found that he could speak, and possibly before; and folk-song must be almost as old as the human race. Moreover, popular tavern-songs were, of course, no novelty in the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the songs of the Trouvères, the Troubadours, the Jongleurs, and the Frottole cannot be regarded as the formal compositions of definite individuals designed on the principles of what is known as art-song.

For thousands of years music had been developed on purely melodic and monodic lines, but when the musicians of the Western world made the great discovery that melodies could be combined and that different notes could be sung simultaneously with beautiful effect, this new Art remained for a long time in the hands of the clergy and was used almost entirely in connexion with the services of the Church. Thus, for many generations all the laws governing musical composition of the new kind were evolved by the clergy, and the craft of serious and scientific composition was exclusively

a clerical one. Some secular compositions were indeed produced on scientific lines from time to time in the fourteenth century, and even earlier. Examples of these are the early Florentine madrigals of Landino, Piero, and Zacharias, and a century earlier John of Fornsete had written the famous round *Sumer is icumen in* in Reading Abbey. These secular pieces formed a very small proportion of the total output, and cannot be said to represent the most serious efforts of which the composers were capable.

But music shared in the great movement towards expansion and development which was so conspicuous a feature of the sixteenth century throughout the whole of Europe; there came an inevitable demand for a better type as well as a larger quantity of secular music. The result was that, first in the Low Countries and Italy, and later in the century in England, leading musicians turned their attention to evolving that fine secular form of composition which was known as the madrigal. Shortly afterwards abstract instrumental music was beginning to be written for the 'consort', or combination of viols, and also for the key-board instruments of the day and for the lute. At the close of the century the instinct for self-expression led to the evolution of the Art-song for a single voice, a feature of which was the accompaniment, designed to constitute an integral part of the composer's work in contrast to the folk-song, which was either sung without accompaniment or accompanied at the discretion and taste of any individual performer with improvised harmonies.

All these forms of secular music were pre-eminently for the home; and in England, particularly, the performance of it in the great houses, which were built in such numbers during the later years of Elizabeth's reign, was one of the leading features of the domestic life of the period.

The last quarter of the sixteenth century had seen a great

growth of wealth and consequent luxury in England. In certain directions this led to much vulgar display, a feature that has at all times been almost inseparable from a sudden access of wealth; but fortunately the taste of the day was by no means generally on the side of vulgarity; and does not the term 'Elizabethan' stand for some of the noblest dramatic and lyric poetry of all time? The fine taste that was inherent in the Elizabethans resulted not only in the composition of so much splendid music, but also in the widespread custom of singing and playing it. So it was that the newly-rich as well as the old nobility and gentry vied with each other in including music among the many luxurious features of their great houses. Famous composers were often engaged as resident musicians, who occupied an important position in these establishments, ranking with the steward and the master of the household, and often enjoying the private confidence of the members of the family circle.

A typical example of a musical household at this time is Hengrave Hall near Bury St. Edmunds. This house, although by no means one of the largest, is a beautiful and characteristic example of a sixteenth-century mansion. It was built by Sir Thomas Kytson, a wool merchant who had made a large fortune trading with Antwerp. The magnificence of the establishment was much increased by his son, Sir Thomas, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallis, of Brome Hall, not far distant over the Norfolk border. If the elder Kytson was a self-made man, his son found his way into first-rate society; moreover, his two daughters made excellent matches, the elder one, Elizabeth, marrying Sir Charles Cavendish; and the younger, Mary, married Thomas, Lord Darcy, who subsequently was raised to the Earldom of Rivers. The heraldic embellishments of Hengrave are full of reference to the alliances of the younger Sir Thomas and his daughters.

HENGRAVE HALL

This Sir Thomas, and more particularly his wife, patronized music extensively, and music was richly provided for in their house. Most fortunately a large collection of documents and letters accumulated at Hengrave during the time of the Kytsons has been preserved. Among these documents are two inventories; the first of these was made on the death of the younger Sir Thomas in March 1602–3, and the second in July 1621. The list of musical instruments and books in these inventories is of remarkable interest:

In ye chamber where ye musicyons playe
Instrewments and Books of Musicke

Item, one borded chest, with locke and key, with vj vialls . . . . . iiij*li.*
Item, one borded chest, with six violenns . . . iij*li.*
Item, one case of recorders, in nomber vij . . . xl*s.*
Item, iiij cornutes, one being a mute cornute . . . x*s.*
Item, one great base lewte, and a meane lewte, both wᵗʰout cases . . . . . xxx*s.*
Item, one trebble lute and a meane lute with cases . xl*s.*
Item, one bandore, and a sitherne with a double case . xxx*s.*
Item, two sackboots wᵗʰ ther cases . . . . xxx*s.*
Item, three hoeboys wᵗʰ a curtall [1] and a lysarden [2] . xx*s.*
Item, two flewtes wᵗʰout cases . . . . ij*s.* vj*d.*
Item, one payer of little virginalls . . . . x*s.*
Item, one wind instrument like a virginall . . . xx*s.*
Item, two lewting books covered with lether . .
Item, vj bookes covered with pchement, contᵍ vj setts in a book, with songs of iiij, v, vj, vij, and viij partes . } ij*s.*
Item, v books covered with pchement contᵍ iij setts in a book with songs of v parts . . . . . iij*s.*
Item, vj books covered with pchement contᵍ ij setts in a book, with English songs of iiij, v, and vj partes . iij*s.*
Item, v books covered with pchement, wᵗʰ pavines, galliards, measures and cuntry daunces . . . v*s.*
Item, v books of levaultoes and corrantoes . . . vj*d.*

[1] A short kind of bassoon. [2] A serpent, or bass cornet.

Item, v old books covered w^th^ pchment w^th^ songes of v partes . . . . . vj*d.*
Item, v bookes covered with blacke lether . . . ij*s.*
Item, iiij books covered with pchment w^th^ songes of iiij partes . . . . . vj*d.*
Item, v books covered with pchment w^th^ pavines and galliards for the consert . . . . . iij*s.*
Item, one great booke w^h^ came from Cadis covered w^th^ redd lether, and gylt . . . . . x*s.*
Item, v books cont^g^ one sett of Italyan fa-laes . xviij*d.*
Item, one great payer of dooble virginalls. In the parlo^r^ xxx*s.*
Item, one payer of great orgaynes. In the Churche . v*li.*

Item, hangings of blewe and yellow saye complete . iij*s.*
Item, one long bord with ij tressels . . . . ij*s.*
Item, one long ioyned forme and one playne forme . ij*s.*

This splendid collection of instruments was at the disposal of the 'Master of the musicke' for the use of the players under his control. The 'chamber where the musicyons playe' was the chamber looking into the hall, the only part of the house that has been altered since the time of the Kytsons. It must be assumed that there was a small number of paid musicians in the private band, some of whom would perhaps hold other domestic positions in the house, while some would live in the neighbouring town of Bury St. Edmunds, but their number would be certainly supplemented from the many retainers who lived in the house. With these ample resources instrumental music would be performed either during supper or after it, and also on any special gala occasion.

Next to the 'musicyons' chamber', or minstrel gallery, was the chamber occupied by the resident 'Master of the musicke', a position held at Hengrave for many years by no less a person than John Wilbye, the great madrigal-writer, who succeeded Robert Johnson, another notable Elizabethan composer. Edward Johnson was also at one time connected with Hen-

grave Hall, possibly as an assistant to Wilbye. In the inventory of 1602-3 this room is called 'Willbee's chamber'. It contained:

Item, one playne borded bedstead corded . . . ij*s.*
Item, one matt and one fether bedd . . . } xxj*s.*
Item, two boulsters of canves and one of tyk . }
Item, one payr of russett woollen blanketts . . v*s.*
Item, one coverlett of blewe and redd woollen being double and lyned with southege or canves . . iiij*s.*
Item, one other coverlett of ocknells lyned with canves . iij*s.*
Item, hangings of greene saye for ye chamber compleate iij*s.*
Item, one ioyned stoole and one borde with feete and one playne forme . . . . . } ij*s.*
Item, one latten plate for a candell . . . . }

By 1621 Wilbye's position had grown more important at Hengrave and his room was more fully furnished; the chair was a noticeable addition.

In Willbee's Chamber

Item, One posted bedstead corded . . . . . i*s.*
Item, One matt . . . . . i*s.*
Item, One fether bed . . . . . i*s.*
Item, One bolster . . . . . i*s.*
Item, Twoe pillowes of twylle . . . . . ij*s.*
Item, One payer of w^t^ wollen blanckets . . . i*s.*
Item, One coverlet of red and blew duble stuff lynd with canvis . . . . . i*s.*
Item, One coverled of verders lynd with canvis . . i*s.*
Item, One teastor of blew and yelow saye frengd with blew and yelowe crewell . . . . . i*s.*
Item, Two curtains of grene and white strypt mocado for the bedd . . . . . iiij*s.*
Item, Three curtain rodds of Irone for the bedd . . iij*s.*
Item, One chayer covered with grene cloth frengd with yelow crewell . . . . . ij*s.*
Item, One great cushion of tapestrie . . . . . i*s.*

Item, One curtayne of blewe and yelowe say for the windowe . . . . . is.
Item, One curtayne rod of Irone for the windowe . is.
Item, One Joynd cubbord . . . . . is.
Item, One table with twoe trestells . . . . is.
Item, Twoe longe playne formes to sett trunckes on . ijs.
Item, Twoe high joyned stooles . . . . . ijs.
Item, One pewter water pott . . . . . is.
Item, One staff to beate the bedd with . . . is.
Item, Six bed staves . . . . . vjs.

The household account books at Hengrave also contain numerous entries which throw light on the musical features of home life in Elizabethan days. For example, Elizabeth and Mary Kytson were taught as children to play the virginal, and the fee was a very handsome one compared with other charges for music. 'To one Cosen for teaching the children of the Virgenalls from Christmas until Easter iij*li.*' The Winchester College accounts show that Weelkes received no more than 13*s.* 4*d.* for a quarter's stipend as the college organist. Other instructive extracts from the Hengrave account books are:

1572. Item, x yards carsey . . . gyven by my m^rss^ to the musicians. . . . . xxjs. vj*d.*
Item, In rewarde to Maud of Norwich for amending the virgenalls . . . . iijs. iiij*d.*
Item, for a treable violin . . . . . xxs.
Item, In rewarde to Johnson[1] the musician at Hengrave . . . . . xs.
1574. Item, For vij cornetts bought for the musicians iiij*li.*

[1] Some confusion has arisen about the musicians of the name of Johnson. It is most improbable that Robert Johnson, the Hengrave musician at this date, was identical with the Robert Johnson who flourished in 1626, as stated in the article in the *D. N. B.* Nor must he be confused with the Robert Johnson, 'priest', an early Elizabethan composer. There seem to have been at least three musicians named Robert Johnson in addition to John and Edward.

1575. Item, In reward to the musicians on new years morning . . . . . xl*s*.
Item, Paid to Robert [1] the musician . . ij*s*. vj*d*.
Item, For a trumpet . . . . . xl*s*.
Item, For a payer of virginales . . . . xxx*s*.
Item, In reward to vj trumpetters at my m^r^ his comand^t^ for sounding before his chamber on twelfth day . . . . . x*s*.
Item, In reward to Johnson [1] the musician for his charges in awayting on my L. of Leycester at Kennelworth . . . . . x*s*.

We now pass on to the great hall which was the principal room in a Tudor house just as it was in the older baronial castles. All meals were still taken in the hall, although towards the end of the sixteenth century it was becoming the practice for the family occasionally to have supper in the parlour. The tables were arranged in the hall just as they are in modern days in any college hall at Oxford or Cambridge. The family sat at the high table on a raised dais. The master and mistress alone would occupy chairs, which were still scarce in Elizabeth's reign, the rest of the family and the guests being accommodated with stools. This statement is borne out by the Hengrave inventory of 1602, which mentions no more than two chairs in the list of furniture in the hall, while there were also 'fower and twenty hye joined stooles covered with carpet work'. Long tables with benches were set along the sides of the hall for the officers of the household, the yeomen, the servants and other dependants, and if there were too many guests to sit at the high table, some of them would sit at the upper ends of the side tables, a 'salt' being placed to mark the class distinction between them and the other occupants of the table. At the ends of the hall 'court-cupboards' stood, on which the plate was displayed. The floor, whether of stone or wood,

[1] See note on p. 15.

was strewn with rushes. The walls were hung with tapestry, and the Hengrave inventories mention cushions and curtains and other such modern luxuries as would have been unknown a century earlier. After dark in the winter the hall was lighted by candles, suspended from the roof on simple wooden or iron coronas. The candles were usually made at home from the fat accumulated in the kitchen. The Hengrave household accounts have allusions to this detail: 'For v days work in making candle at vj*d*. the daye . . . ij*s*. vj*d*.' and the amount of candles burnt in the hall, apparently in a year, may be judged from the following entry: 'Candell of the last remaynt ix*c*. xxxviiij*lb*. whereof spent (i. e. burnt) at the hall cc*lb*.' In these surroundings the English madrigals were first performed.

Some details of the daily routine of life in such a household at this period must be added in order to complete the picture. The day began early. The breakfast hour was commonly 6.30, and after it the men would spend the morning in the sports of the field and the ladies in embroidery and other domestic occupations, though a few of them also indulged in the sport of hawking, while the yeomen and servants went about their various business. In the towns the serious affairs of the day were also dealt with at an early hour; for example, the House of Commons assembled at 8 a.m. at this date. Dinner was the principal meal of the day, and was taken at noon or sometimes a little earlier. The afternoon was spent in the garden, in games, or in country walks; a few of the largest houses could boast a tennis-court; and a bowling-alley was found in every garden; bowls seems to have been played for small money stakes, for in the Hengrave accounts we read: 'Lost in play by my m^{r} at the bowles in Draps hall viij*d*.' Alternatives to these things on wet days were chess and backgammon, cards, and dice, and higher sums than 8*d*. were lost and won. Kytson's

experience is recorded thus in another entry of the Hengrave accounts: 'Lost in play by my m[r] ii*j*li.' But much time was also spent by both sexes in reading and writing, and some in playing the virginals and the lute, and in singing songs. The lute was played by the ladies as well as by men at this time; the Hengrave accounts mention the item 'for stringing tuning and fretting my m[res] lute . . . ij*s.* vj*d.*'

The usual hour for supper was 5.30. It was after supper, as Thomas Morley, writing in 1597, tells us, that the mistress of the house, according to custom, was wont to serve out the part-books and call upon her guests to join with the family in singing madrigals. This would scarcely have been an everyday occurrence, and it was, no doubt, varied sometimes by a 'consort of viols', or by the playing of the 'musicyons' in their gallery overlooking the hall, while the rival attractions of cards or dice or chess must have frequently supplanted the music even in the most cultured homes. In this connexion the Hengrave inventory mentions 'one chessborde with a bagge of lether for the men' being kept in the dining-hall. But without doubt madrigals were frequently sung after supper. Morley's authority in the opening pages of his *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* is often cited to show that it was regarded as an essential part of a gentleman's education that he should be able to take part in a madrigal at sight. The passage is so commonly misquoted that it is necessary to refer to it once more here. The scholar was not in the first place 'asked to join in a song'; what exposed him to adverse comment was his refusal, on the ground of ignorance, to undertake the task of acting as umpire between two of the guests who during supper were differing hotly upon a musical point. The request to sing in a madrigal came later:

'Among the rest of the guests, by chance, master *Aphron* came thither also, who falling to discourse of Musicke, was in

an argument so quickly taken up and hotly pursued by *Eudoxus* and *Calergus*, two kinsmen of *Sophobulus*, as in his own art he was overthrowen. But he still sticking in his opinion, the two gentlemen requested me to examine his reasons and confute them. But I refusing and pretending ignorance, the whole company condemned me of discurtesie, being fully perswaded, that I had beene as skilfull in that art, as they tooke me to be learned in others. But supper being ended, and Musick bookes (according to the custome) being brought to the tables, the mistresse of the house presented me with a part, earnestly requesting me to sing. But when, after many excuses I protested unfainedly that I could not: every one began to wonder. Yea, some whispered to others, demaunding how I was brought up.'

The implication, it will be seen, was that an educated man ought not only to be able to take his part in a madrigal but also to know the niceties of musical theory. Some allowance must be made for the fact that Morley was, in a sense, writing an advertisement of his own work as a music-teacher with the express object of persuading people to study his book and learn to sing. But even so the statement, as a contemporary record, is a weighty one; and Morley's evidence is supported by that of Henry Peacham, who wrote in *The Compleat Gentleman* in 1622 that one of the fundamental qualifications of a gentleman was to be able 'to sing your part sure, at first sight, withall to play the same upon your Violl or the exercise of your lute'. Peacham here adds instrumental playing to Morley's two requirements. There can be no doubt that ability to sing at sight, which in the twentieth century is somewhat exceptional, was very general among the educated classes at the close of the sixteenth century, even though it may have been far from being a universal accomplishment. It must be remembered, too, that a family who were frequently singing madrigals in their home would have their favourites, and would not often have to read absolutely new compositions

at sight. When the rest of the party were not trying something new it would not have been very difficult for a guest to join in with the rest of the singers, even if he happened to be only moderately proficient.

The list of madrigal part-books belonging to the Kytsons has already been quoted from the inventory. At this date scarcely more than half of the works of the English madrigalists had been published; among the important sets issued subsequently were Wilbye's second set, Byrd's third set, and the sets of Gibbons, Ward, Tomkins, and Bateson, to mention no others. The Hengrave books do not appear to include any duplicates, and more than one singer may have sung from each of the single part-books. The pictures of the day always represent several singers sharing a copy. It is regrettable that the sets in the Hengrave inventory are not actually named, but it may be noticed that several sets of part-books were bound together; in one case as many as six were so bound. In all there were at Hengrave at least fifteen sets or separate publications of madrigals and ballets, not reckoning the instrumental part-books. One of the sets is definitely stated to consist of Italian ballets, probably those of Gastoldi, and two sets bound together were English madrigals. Some of the books were no doubt manuscript collections. Unfortunately no hint is given of the contents of the fine book from Cadiz, valued at as much as ten shillings.

It has already been stated that the room in which John Wilbye lived for so many years at Hengrave Hall can now be identified by means of the inventories, which follow a definite order through the house; and the list of the furniture is given in such detail that we even know the colour of the curtains and chair-coverings. Moreover, Hengrave Hall has been very little altered since the sixteenth century; the portraits of the Kytsons, of Sir Charles and Lady Cavendish, of Lord and

Lady Rivers, and of other relatives of the family, who were also Wilbye's friends and associates, still hang on the walls. In addition to the inventories and household books, a remarkable collection of original letters is still kept among the treasures of the house; these include autograph letters of Queen Mary, Elizabeth's sister, Sir Philip Sidney, and John Wilbye himself. Thus in Hengrave Hall a unique picture has been handed down to us of the surroundings in which one of the greatest of all madrigal writers lived and worked, and it requires no great effort of imagination to reconstruct the scene in which *Sweet honey-sucking bees*, *Stay Corydon*, *Flora gave me fairest flowers*, or any of Wilbye's other famous madrigals were sung for the first time, when, supper at Hengrave Hall 'being ended and the Musicke bookes being brought to the tables the mistresse of the house', Lady Kytson, presented her guests and family with their part-books, and also manuscript parts newly written in Wilbye's own hand, 'earnestly requesting them to sing'.

Apart from the ordinary cultivation of music in the home of which the preceding pages are intended to construct a picture, there were special occasions in the life of the upper classes at this period when festivities were organized, and music almost always formed a special feature of these. For instance, a wedding in a wealthy and prominent family was usually accompanied by very elaborate festivities, and the custom of providing a dramatic entertainment of an important character was not uncommon on such occasions. It is generally thought, for example, that Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first produced at some notable wedding festivities. Various weddings have been suggested in this connexion, but the most likely are thought to be either that of Edward, third Earl of Bedford and Lucy Harington, or of William, seventh Earl of Derby and Lady Elizabeth Vere. Wedding festivities

were often kept up for as long as a fortnight, and music held an important part in the scheme of entertainment. Stow describes a wedding which took place at this same period in London, ' where was as good cheer as ever was known with all manner of Musick, . . . at night a goodly supper and then followed a Masque until midnight. . . . The next day . . . after supper came in Masquers.' The masques provided the musicians with great opportunities, and many excellent compositions were produced at them ; for instance, Campian wrote the words and some of the music for several such masques.

There was a further opportunity for the composer in the ceremonies designed for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth when she visited a country house. A contemporary printed description of her visit to Lord Hertford's house at Elvetham in 1591 is full of interesting and highly amusing detail. It was reprinted in the eighteenth century, not very accurately, by Nichols in his *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*. Prominent among the features provided for her entertainment on this occasion was the music, and it was music of the very best class. On her first arrival, after she had been greeted with a long Latin poem, ' a sweet song of six partes ' was sung by six maidens representing ' the Graces and the Howres '. The refrain of this madrigal was :

O beauteous Queen of second Troy
Accept of our unfeigned joy.

This composition was almost certainly Byrd's six-part setting of ' This sweet and merry month of May '. The words, which may have been adapted for the occasion, were by Thomas Watson, and Byrd's madrigal had already been published in Watson's *First set of Italian Madrigals Englished* in 1590. The difficulty of the tenor and bass voices would have been got over by some singers being hidden in the adjacent bushes, a device that was certainly employed on another occasion in

THE ELVETHAM ENTERTAINMENT

From the engraving in the original edition printed by John Wolfe in 1591

these Elvetham festivities. On the same evening after supper 'her Maiestie gratiously admitted vnto hir presence a notable consort of six Musitions . . Their musicke so highly pleased hir, that . . . she gaue a newe name vnto one of their Pavans, made long since by maister *Thomas Morley*, then Organist of Pauls Church.' On the next day there was a 'variety of consorted musick al dinner time', and after dinner an elaborate entertainment was given on the lake in the Park; there was much lively horse-play in this entertainment, but also a good deal of music: 'In the pinnace were three Virgines, which with their Cornets played Scottish Gigges, made three parts in one. There was also in the said pinnace another nymph of the sea, named *Neaera*. . . . Neere to hir were placed three excellent voices, to sing to one lute, and in two other boats hard by, other lutes and voices to answere by maner of Eccho. . . . The melody was sweet, and the shew stately.' Shortly afterwards 'the three voices in the Pinnace sung a song to the Lute with excellent diuisions'.

On the following morning 'three excellent Musitians, who being disguised in ancient Countrey attire, did greete hir with a pleasant song of *Coridon* and *Phillida*, made in three partes of purpose'. The words were by Nicholas Breton, and may have been written expressly for the occasion; the only known setting of the words by any of the madrigalists is that of Michael East, published in his first set of madrigals in 1604. East's setting is for three voices, and possibly was the one referred to. If this is so, he was a few years older than has generally been assumed, but so little is known of his personal history that the possibility cannot be ruled out. There was a curious error in the title of this song as it appeared in the original edition of 1591; but in the second edition, also of 1591, it was correctly printed by John Wolfe as *The three mens song*; Nicholas, for some strange reason, perpetuated the

original mistake, and has *The ploxmans song*, and this error has been copied into modern editions of Breton's poems, generally without comment.

On the day of the Queen's departure there was another 'song of sixe partes with the musicke of an exquisite consorte', to words beginning *Elisa is the fayrest Queene*. During this performance 'the queene of Fairies . . . danced and sung before hir Maiestie', who insisted on the performance being repeated three times over, and 'called for diuers Lords and Ladies to behold it'. And finally, 'as hir Maiestie passed through the Park gate, there was a consort of Musitions hidden in a Bower, to whose playing this dittie of *Come againe* was sung, with excellent division, by two that were cunning'. 'As this song was sung, hir Maiestie notwithstanding the great raine, staied hir Coach, and pulled off hir mask giving great thāks.' Both these last compositions are almost certainly the work of Edward Johnson; they are to be found in British Museum Add. MSS. 30480–4.

Enough has been said to show how active was the spirit of music in the homes of merrie England in Shakespeare's day, when the Queen and her courtiers could sing and play instruments with skill, and when music of all kinds was so much loved and encouraged. Seeing the extensive part music played in the lives of the Elizabethans, we have little surprise that so splendid a school of composers should have flourished in England at the time. English people are slow to-day in recognizing how high was the position of English music in the days of Shakespeare. Byrd, Wilbye, Morley, Dowland, and Weelkes were all living and in the height of their activity in the year 1600. It may be doubted whether any other nation has ever been able to boast of five such great names in a group of contemporary composers. Certain it is that these five alone did enough to place England at the head of all the musical

countries of Europe at that day, and their names should stand proudly among those of other great Englishmen who at different periods have achieved great fame in Literature, the Drama, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture.

2

The Madrigal

a. *Origin and Etymology*

The madrigal had its origin in northern Italy, perhaps as early as the twelfth century, although the form of song to which the term was first applied was very far removed from the elaborate type of composition which it denoted in the sixteenth century. The word first appears in literature as a term of music in the early part of the fourteenth century, when it was used by two writers, named Francesco da Barbarino and Antonio da Tempo, in the Latin form *matricale*; but it must be inferred that it was in common use in the northern districts of Italy many years earlier than this. It was Scheler, in 1873, when his dictionary of French etymology was published, who first perceived and stated that all the traditional theories as to the derivation of the word had become suspect since the discovery of the word *matrialia* in the works of a fourteenth-century Latin author, denoting a species of musical composition. But Scheler did not pursue the subject further.

The whole subject of the origin and etymology of the Italian word *madrigale*, or English *madrigal*, is dealt with in a most clear and convincing manner by Signor Leandro Biadene, Professor of neo-Latin literature in the University of Pisa, in a highly interesting essay contributed to the *Rassegna bibliografica della letteratura italiana*, a Pisa quarterly magazine,

in 1898. The problem of the derivation of the word was undoubtedly solved by Signor Biadene, although it still remains a subject for conjecture why the medieval Latin word *matricale* came to be adopted to describe the primitive songs of the Florentine rustics. Biadene put forward a suggestion that seems a plausible one, namely, that the adjective *matricalis* as used in conjunction with *cantus*, or the neuter form *matricale* coupled with *carmen*, may have acquired a meaning which was virtually synonymous with *materna* when used with *lingua*; and that just as *lingua materna* means 'mother tongue', so *carmen matricale*, or *cantus matricalis*, may have stood for 'mother song', denoting the primitive and spontaneous song of the country folk, in other words, *folk-song*, and that it came to be associated subsequently with some special class of folk-song of individual character. Be that as it may, it is nevertheless certain that early in the fourteenth century Barbarino, in a work entitled *De variis inveniendi et rimandi modis*, used the word *matricale* to denote a particular kind of song, which seems to have been somewhat more elaborate in character than an ordinary folk-song, for in another instance about the same date a boy is described as being able to sing '*matrialia etiam difficillima*', a performance that was evidently regarded as a feat of unusual skill on the part of the boy; yet this passage suggests that these *matrialia* or *matricalia* were of the nature of solo-song rather than works written in two or more parts, and they may have represented some sort of florid development of folk-song. In any case, *matrialia etiam difficillima* must imply something that had advanced beyond the primitive stages of development, even though it fell very far short of the elaborate devices which characterize the sixteenth-century madrigal. The fourteenth-century madrigals, however, show us exactly what these early developments were. Three specimens of such compositions,

definitely described as madrigals in the original manuscripts, which are now in the *Mediceo-Laurenziana* library in Florence, were printed in the second volume of *The Oxford History of Music*. Among these is an extract from a fourteenth-century madrigal, *Tu che l'opera d'altrui*, by Francesco di Landino, which is also to be found in the present author's *English Madrigal Composers*. Landino was born in 1325, and was the leading musician of the Florentine school of composers in the middle of the fourteenth century; he became totally blind early in life, but for many years was organist to the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. Landino's madrigal was for two voices only, but the voices follow each other with frequent points of imitation, much in the manner of the sixteenth-century madrigals, although single syllables of words were often employed over very long passages of the music in the same style as the church music of that date.

After Landino's time the development of the madrigal on musical lines entirely ceased for a long period, during which the term was kept alive in a modified form to denote a certain type of short lyric of a pastoral character, much in vogue in the fifteenth century in Italy. These little poems were commonly described by the term *madriale* and *mandriale*. But when about the year 1533 those Flemish composers who had migrated to Italy renewed the development of the secular contrapuntal songs, employing the methods of Landino and his contemporaries with far greater elaboration and skill, and writing for four, five, and six voices in combination instead of limiting themselves to two, as in the fourteenth century, they revived the old term that Landino had used. Thus Verdelot, Willaert, and Arcadelt described their compositions as *madrigali* on the title-pages of their early sets of books, and thus set the fashion followed by all the great Italian composers throughout the sixteenth century. This naturally resulted in the word

being adopted in England when the singing of Italian madrigals first became the vogue early in Elizabeth's reign; and although Byrd for some reason avoided the actual term in his first two sets of secular compositions in 1588 and 1589, while Morley's first set in 1593 were described as *Canzonets*, Morley's four-part set in 1594 were issued under the title of *Madrigals*, and the term was almost universally adopted by the rest of the English composers in the following thirty years in which the entire output of the English School was produced.

The madrigal, like a great many other products of the Renaissance came to England direct from Italy. As the Italian madrigal school dates from the second quarter of the sixteenth century, it seems strange that the English School did not begin to flourish until fifty years later. This was due to the fact that the English musicians throughout the middle of the century were chiefly pre-occupied by the religious upheavals connected with the Reformation, and their energies were almost wholly absorbed in the production of Church music for both the Latin and English rites. But more secular music was written in England in the middle of the century than is sometimes supposed, even if little of it was of much merit. Even earlier, there was a considerable production for combined voices, and soon after 1500 an important group of English composers were writing music for three voices to secular words. The work of Fayrfax dates from the close of the fifteenth century, but in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII the leading secular composer, if we may judge from the scanty material that survives, was William Cornish, or Cornysshe as the name is commonly spelt. Cornish was master of ' the Children of the Chapel ', and it is probable that many of his secular compositions were written for masques. Other men were Dr. Cooper, William Newark, Richard Davy,

Edmund Turges, and Henry VIII himself; but the authorship of several pieces attributed to the last is based wholly upon the mention of his name at the top of a particular manuscript, a position which may denote no more than ownership. The greater part of this music was for three voices. The folk-song strain was strongly stamped on it, and the style and harmonies have a decidedly antique flavour that contrasts in a marked way with the Elizabethan music; and even the gayer subjects were treated somewhat in the manner of church music. Yet some of Cornish's work has a beauty of its own, notably his *Adieu my heart is lost*, *Ah the sighs that come from my heart*, *You and I and Amyas*, and *Ah Robin, gentle Robin*. In the middle of the century Tallis and Tye gave some of their lighter moments to secular work, but although the madrigal was being so finely developed in Italy in their day, their secular style does not show any great advance upon that of Cornish and his contemporaries. Richard Edwards's *In going to my naked bed*, which was written certainly as early as 1564, is almost a unique example among the English secular works surviving from that date that can be regarded as truly madrigalian and on a level with contemporary Italian work. It is possible that Edwards, being a man of exceptional culture, had travelled in Italy and come in contact with continental composers. The *Songes of three, fower, and five voyces* of Thomas Whythorne, printed in 1571, mark an important development of the English madrigal, although they fall far short of the work of Byrd and Morley, some twenty years later. Whythorne was a man of means, and he, too, may at some time have come under direct Italian influence.

This slight sketch will suffice to show that the continuity of English secular vocal composition was maintained throughout the sixteenth century, even though the progress in its development was small.

The custom of singing madrigals in English homes was at least as old as the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, and English part-books containing some of the finest Italian madrigals of that date survive as evidence of the contemporary liking for them. This taste strengthened as the century advanced. A certain lay-clerk of St. Paul's Cathedral, named Nicholas Yonge, had done much to popularize the Italian madrigal in this country for some considerable period before 1588, in which year he published a set of part-books, entitled *Musica Transalpina*, containing a varied and representative collection of Italian madrigals adapted to English words. Yonge made a practice of having music books sent to him at regular intervals from Italy, so that he became familiar with all the most recently published works of the kind; and he formed a habit of gathering round him at his house in the parish of St. Michael's, Cornhill, 'a great number of Gentlemen and Merchants (as well of this realme as of forreine nations) . . . for the exercise of Musicke daily'. Yonge's enthusiasm in thus starting what was practically the first 'madrigal society' in this country is greatly to be admired. Thomas Watson, the poet, was another who did much to encourage the popularity of the Italian madrigals, and in 1590 his *First sett of Italian Madrigalls Englished* was published. Before this date Byrd had already written some of the madrigals which were eventually printed, for they exist in manuscripts of earlier date than 1590; but it would seem that Yonge and Watson exerted an important influence in turning his mind and that of Morley towards the composition of madrigals, and once this was done the flood-gates were opened through which that splendid torrent of the finest English music so rapidly flowed.

We must now return to Signor Biadene's exposition of the etymology of the term *madrigale*. *Matricale*, as we have already seen, stood for a form of musical composition. From

matricale to *madrigale* is a simple and obvious step, for it only involves the substitution of the Italian *d* and *g* for the Latin *t* and *c*, and without a shadow of doubt *madrigale* is the exact counterpart of the Latin *matricale*. Early variants occurring in Italian literature were *marigale* and *madriale*. In all the standard dictionaries, Italian, French, and English, *madrigale* is stated to be derived from the Latin *mandra* or the Greek *μάνδρα*, meaning 'a fold', and the Italian *mandria*, meaning 'a herd'; and the dictionaries tell us that *mandriale* was the earliest form of it, developing later into *madriale*, and finally into *madrigale*.

Biadene, in the essay already mentioned, shows that this line of succession is absolutely contrary to all the laws and precedents of Italian etymology, and that neither the elimination of the *n* nor the insertion of the *g* can be explained by any known rule. He goes on to show that the true line of development has been exactly the opposite of this. Since the Italian *madrigale*, as just stated, is the exact equivalent of the Latin *matricale* used by Barbarino, *marigale* and *madriale* can easily be explained as variants, because the elimination of the *d* has its exact parallel in the case of such words as *madre* and *padre*, which in the dialect of northern Italy commonly became *mare* and *pare*; thus, says Biadene, da Tempo as a Venetian writing in the fourteenth century would naturally have used *marigalis* for *madrigalis*. Then, again, there are numbers of Italian words in which the *g* has been eliminated, for example, *legale* and *regale* which become *leale* and *reale*; so on similar lines *madrigale* easily becomes *madriale*, while the reverse process is unknown. It only then remains to account for the curious variant *mandriale*, which in common with *madriale* was certainly used in the fifteenth century to denote a short pastoral lyric. This particular little problem lies outside the direct line of the etymological development of the word

madrigale, yet it is a matter of some interest here. Biadene suggests that as *mandria* meant 'a fold', and the word *madriale* was already being used for these little pastoral poems, the word *mandriale* was simply a fusion of those two words. In any case both *madriale* and *mandriale* were dropped when the original form *madrigale* was revived by the musicians, and this lent some colour to the entirely erroneous idea that they were earlier forms of *madrigale*.

As already stated, the word *madrigal*, and also the musical form which it denotes, came to England from Italy; but it may be recalled that in the first instance it was the Flemish composers, Verdelot, Arcadelt, and Willaert, who brought it to Italy when the form was revived in its vastly improved state in the sixteenth century; and the Flemings in their turn frankly admitted the debt which their own school of composition owed to the influence of the earlier English school under the leadership of John Dunstable. It was the Flemish theorist, Johannes Tinctoris, who did not hesitate to ascribe to England the honour of being the *fons et origo* of musical Art. Thus the wheel turned full circle; and the coming of the madrigal from Italy to England, so far from damaging, does something to strengthen, the claim that England in the days of Dunstable, and still earlier in the days of that Reading monk who wrote *Sumer is icumen in*, was the actual cradle of modern music.

b. *Form and Technique*

The Elizabethans were very indiscriminate and vague in applying a terminology to the combined secular songs of their time. Besides *madrigal* they used a number of terms without any exact definition. The most distinctive of them was *Ballet*, meaning a composition of a comparatively regular rhythm in which a *fa-la* refrain was indispensable. Other terms were

PROPERTY

Canzonet or *little short Air*, *Pastoral*, *Neapolitan*, *Song* and *Air*. It might be supposed that a *canzonet* could be readily distinguished from a *madrigal*, but in point of fact the style of composition is precisely the same in both, and in sets described as 'madrigals' there are many pieces which are far shorter and smaller in design than many of those described in other sets as 'canzonets', and vice versa. The *Pastoral* and *Neapolitan* are quite indistinguishable from the *Madrigal* in style; Byrd used the terms *Pastoral* and *Song*, and Tomkins used the word *Song*, for all their madrigalian works; many of the *songs* in Tomkins's set should more precisely have been described as *ballets*; Orlando Gibbons used the term *motet* to describe the compositions in his volume, which are undoubtedly madrigals.

Composers were not then concerned with petty distinctions of nomenclature, nor yet with the stereotyped peculiarities which might characterize this or that phase of musical form. What they cared for was to express themselves and the thoughts of the poets whose words they set in beautiful and forceful music; and here they succeeded amazingly.

For these reasons the madrigal as a musical form cannot to-day be defined in any concise form of words. In ordinary usage it must be taken to mean that elaborate form of secular song for several voices in combination which was first introduced by the Flemish composers in Italy towards the middle of the sixteenth century, and was brought to its full development in the same century as the normal type of secular part-song (to use that term in its most literal sense) by the Italian and English composers. It may be further described as a composition for two or more unaccompanied voices singing in combination, all the voice parts being of equal interest and mainly designed from the same melodic material; the words are treated in short phrases which are taken up by the various

voices one after another in fugal imitation, and the succeeding phrase is introduced usually after two or three repetitions of the previous phrase, commonly overlapping the one it is displacing, with the result that the introduction of a full close was generally avoided. The subjects dealt with were of every variety, according to the fancy of the composer; many of the madrigals are pastoral in style, but by no means exclusively so; many are set to light lyrics and conventional conceits of an amatory character such as the Elizabethans loved; many also are most serious, and a few of these, without being exactly suited to church use, deal with semi-religious subjects. But whatever the subject, the English madrigalists possessed a wonderful faculty for matching the words with exactly the right musical sentiment, and their feeling for verbal accentuation was remarkable in its thoughtfulness and accuracy. They could express every kind of mood, whether grave or gay, and their resources were almost unlimited for expressing anything in the nature of realism.

Those who have attempted to define the madrigal have sometimes added that it was contrapuntal in style and modal in character. The addition is superfluous, because this same description belongs equally to all the music of the sixteenth century, and it does not in any way assist in the discovery of an exact formula. Nor is any precise formula required; for it is an error to regard the madrigal as something as definite as a fugue or a sonata or a symphony. The part song has succeeded and superseded the madrigal, and a modern composer, if he chooses, is at liberty to introduce imitations and other elaborate devices of polyphony into a modern part-song and produce a piece of music bearing the stamp of true Art; but if he thinks it necessary to confine himself to a pastoral subject, to conform to the laws of academic counterpoint, and to the tonality of the old ecclesiastical modes, he will not thereby

turn his work into a madrigal, still less will he be writing in the style of Wilbye, or Weelkes, or Orlando Gibbons. It is just as much an artistic error for a modern composer to attempt to write a madrigal in the Elizabethan manner as it would be for a modern poet to attempt to express himself in the language of Chaucer.

But to the Elizabethans, as well as to the Italian composers of the sixteenth century, the madrigal came as a natural form of self-expression, and in the hands of the Elizabethans, more especially, it was peculiarly a thing of its own date, showing characteristics which cannot be counterfeited to-day, because it belonged to an epoch in which rapid and drastic changes were taking place, both in available chords, and also in modal tonality; for the old modes were in the final stages of the process of giving way to those two modes which are commonly known as the major and minor scales. On these two points it is necessary to say something a little more fully.

The entire history of music written for combined voices up to the closing years of the sixteenth century had been 'contrapuntal', in the ordinary accepted sense of that term; in other words it had been based on the principle of combining independent melodies, each voice having an equal share of the melodic interest, which was not confined to the top voice while merely supported harmonically by the lower voices. The principle of combining melodies is of the first principle of counterpoint. Church music led the way in this matter. Thus, in early days some well-known church melody was chosen, and a single melody, or 'descant', was added to it for simultaneous use. In the first place the new melody was added below the other and so was entitled *bassus*, the original melody being called the *tenor*. This device added interest to the single melody, in such a way that it led to the opening up of those vast fields of the whole of modern music of the

Western world. A further stage in the exploration of these new fields was the addition of a second independent melody, making, with the original melody, a third part. This third part, which was written above the tenor, was called *triplex*, a term which at a later date developed into *treble*. In adding these independent parts it was quickly discovered that the interest and beauty of the music were much increased if some characteristic figure in one voice-part was taken up and copied in another, and thus the device of imitation was evolved.

From the very first stages of these developments it was recognized that certain combinations of sound produced a good effect, and that others were less pleasing, while some had definitely cacophonous results; in this manner a few fundamental principles became established and regarded as rules. The principle of treating each voice-part as an independent melody continued to prevail at a later period even when it became customary to write for five, six, or eight, or more voices in combination, and, roughly speaking, it may be said that the same rules and principles were generally observed by all serious composers, whether of church or secular music, until the close of the sixteenth century, when fresh ground began to be broken by the discovery of new harmonic devices and chords, when the development of the solo-song pointed the way to opera and all the possibilities which were involved in that direction. It was this new movement at the opening of the seventeenth century which led to what has been known as 'harmony' as distinct from what is called 'counterpoint'. The difference between these two styles of music may be briefly summed up in the statement that 'counterpoint' is that kind which deals with the combination of melodies giving to each individual part an equal importance in relation to the structure as a whole; whereas 'harmony' is that which

ordinarily deals with no more than a single melody, the other parts being subordinate and supplementary to it.

But it is not recognized as clearly as it should be that it was no more than an accidental circumstance that the close of the polyphonic period at the end of the sixteenth century coincided with the invention of new chords, and that these chords were in point of fact used by the polyphonic writers, notably by Orlando di Lasso and Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, in Italy, and by Weelkes and Dowland in England, in addition to Monteverde, who has generally been given the whole of the credit for the harmonic novelties of the period. The discovery and use of chromatic chords by the composers just mentioned, as well as the free use of the dominant seventh and its inversions, were the inevitable outcome of the spirit of adventure and experiment so conspicuously present in European life at that period, and they were merely the precursors of many more similar discoveries in the succeeding centuries, just as they were the inevitable successors of those of the fourteenth century. The discovery of the major third and of the common chord was just as revolutionary in its day as was the discovery of the dominant seventh, and both alike were, in fact, harmonic, and not contrapuntal, discoveries. As already stated it was an accidental circumstance that the polyphonic style of composition was played out by about the year 1600, and that new styles were taking its place just at the same moment when these new chords were coming into use. The new chords themselves had nothing whatever to do with the change of style, but the chance that the two things happened approximately at the same period has resulted in a strange confusion of ideas, and it has become the custom to classify all music earlier than 1600 as 'contrapuntal', and all subsequent to that as 'harmonic'. Harmonic development has indeed progressed steadily from the fourteenth to the twentieth century,

and it is still progressing, and counterpoint, in the true sense of combining melodies, far from ceasing to exist in the year 1600, is as much alive in its modern harmonic clothing as at any previous time in musical history. Harmony and counterpoint were of twin birth, and both were born at that great moment when the principle of monodic music, which had prevailed ever since the days of primitive man, gave place in the western world to the principle of combining sounds.

It is very commonly stated that all music written before the year 1600 is strictly modal, but this statement is not borne out by a careful study of the facts. The principles of modal tonality inevitably began to break down as soon as music began to be harmonized, in other words as soon as the principle of writing for two or more voices came into vogue, for it immediately became necessary to introduce various accidentals; and this innovation directly affected the characteristic tonality of the individual modes. This individuality had already begun to be seriously impaired by the use of accidentals in the polyphonic music of the early part of the sixteenth century, and, as the century progressed, so the tonality of the music tended more and more in the direction of the modern major and minor scales, while the rest of the modes were becoming merged in these two. A large number of the English madrigals may frankly be regarded as being in modern keys rather than in the modes; yet a few of them are rather severely modal, and a large proportion are certainly strongly influenced by modal tonality, even though great freedom was used in the matter of accidentals. In this detail more than in any other, we see to what a large extent the conditions in which these composers worked were transitional. Writing at a time of upheaval and transition, they were subject in an exceptional degree to the spirit of innovation and experiment in all directions; they were more free from conventional

practice than were the Italian madrigalists, who for the most part had worked a generation earlier than the Elizabethans, or, indeed, than any group of composers who had preceded them. For this reason there are all manner of inconsistencies to be found in their music, as judged by earlier—and later—academic standards; yet it scarcely ever lacked spontaneity, and the stamp of individuality was so strongly impressed upon it that each of the leading composers displays some distinguishing characteristics which differentiate his work from that of his contemporaries. In the face of these facts it will readily be recognized that any modern attempt to counterfeit an Elizabethan madrigal must be doomed to failure; most of those who in modern times have attempted the task would seem to have lacked the necessary knowledge which should have enabled them to distinguish between the styles of, say, Wilbye, Morley, Gibbons, and Ward, to mention but four suggestive examples; and they have complacently supposed that a knowledge of the modes and a proficiency in academic counterpoint, as defined in the eighteenth century, formed an ample equipment for their purpose.

A few further words are needed about the *Ballet*, the distinguishing feature of which was the *fa-la* refrain. The term was originally used exclusively with the dance, and it would seem that in course of time it came to denote a species of musical form in which singing and dancing both played a part. In later times the dancing element dropped out, and the *ballet* survived in the hands of the Italian and English madrigalists as a formal composition for combined voices. In the eighteenth century the *minuet* passed through a very similar experience; for whereas it had formerly been used exclusively as a dance measure, it was exploited by the great classical composers and took shape as an abstract and separate form of music. But the *ballet* of the madrigalists remained very

distinctive in style; it retained much of the regularity of rhythm which is so essential to the dance, and it has a clear-cut character which is as a rule entirely absent from the madrigal.

One other class of composition must also be briefly touched upon here. The term *Air*, or *Ayre*, as it was very generally spelt at the time, was used as an alternative to *Canzonet*, but it was also used to denote another class of composition altogether. As already stated, the Elizabethan musicians found their most natural form of expression in what is known as the contrapuntal style, according to which the voices entered successively rather than simultaneously, and the verbal phrases were each repeated several times. Towards the end of the century it began to be felt by certain musicians that the constantly-crossing and complex rhythms had a tendency to obscure the meaning of the words, and that the sense of the poetry as well as its beauty was apt to be spoilt by over-much repetition. It was also found that madrigal-form made it difficult to treat more than one stanza of a lyric in a single composition, although there might be several stanzas belonging to it. A simpler form was therefore followed enabling the poem to be sung right through with scarcely any complexity, by repeating the same music to each stanza. As the term implies, this form was founded on the simple method of designing a melody, or *Air*, for a single voice, and supporting it, either with other voices supplying the harmonies in a manner somewhat resembling the modern part-song, or with instrumental accompaniment supplied by a lute and bass-viol. The well-known madrigal of Gibbons, *The silver swan*, affords an excellent illustration of a madrigal which is scarcely distinguishable in character from the 'ayres' of the lutenist song-writers.

c. *The Part-books*

Neither in the printed editions nor in the manuscript copies of the sixteenth century did musical compositions appear in full score, with all the voice parts in their relative positions, as in modern music. Manuscript collections, both for church and secular use, were made in part-books, each of which contained the single stave of music to be used by each voice. Thus the 'Cantus' book would contain the treble, or soprano, part and no more. The origin of this custom may have been due to economy, for certainly a small single part-book often contains a very large number of compositions; paper was expensive, and musical scribes none too numerous. Whether for similar reasons or not, the printed vocal music was published on the same plan. For ordinary purposes a complete set of part-books would consequently number three, four, five, or six, according to the maximum number of voices employed in the set of compositions contained in it. This system was applied to the secular music-books and those containing any sacred pieces intended to be sung in the home. In the cathedral and collegiate choirs ten part-books constituted a complete set, because they provided for music written in five parts (usually including two altos), and for choirs divided into two sides, *Cantoris* and *Decani*. Thus, for example, in Durham Cathedral the complete set of splendid manuscript folios (two of which are unfortunately missing) consisted of the Medius, 1st Contratenor, 2nd Contratenor, Tenor, and Bassus books for the *Cantoris* side, and the same for the *Decani* side. Barnard's famous collection of cathedral music, entitled *First Book of Selected Church Musick*, published in 1641, also consisted of ten books of similar description; the sections to be sung only by the *Cantoris* side of the choir were not included in the *Decani* books, and vice versa, so that the *Decani* and *Cantoris*

Y Miſtriſſe after ſeruice due, Demaunded if indeed my
loue were true, I ſaid it was, Then ſhee replide, That I muſt
hate whom ſhe deſide, that :||: that :||: And ſo my ſelfe,
and :||: aboue the reſt, aboue the reſt, Whom ſhe, ſhe ſwore did moſt of
all de- teſt, whom :||: whom :||: In ſooth ſaid I, you ſee
I hate my ſelfe, you ſee :||: Who ſets my loue on ſuch a peeuiſh elfe. Who
:||: on ſuch a pee- uiſh elfe. In ſooth ſaid I, you ſee I hate my
ſelfe, you ſee :||: who ſets my loue on ſuch a peeuiſh elfe. who ſets :||:
on ſuch a pee-uiſh elfe.

A page from Bateson's First Set of Madrigals

books are not duplicate except in the 'full' sections, and all ten books are needed for the reconstruction of the score.

It seems certain that the composers at this date must have written their works in full vocal score in the first instance, for scores are known to have existed although scarcely any examples have survived. But a score served no further purpose when it passed from the composer's hands, either into those of the scribes who copied the single parts into the various manuscript sets, or into the printer's, whose business it was to separate the single parts and print them in part-books. No score was printed, and it seems probable that the printer customarily destroyed it, for no value was set upon autographs at that date, nor was any sentimental interest attached to a composer's score, while the practice of conducting a work from the score seems to have been unknown.

It is remarkable that England was a very long way behind Italy in the matter of printing music-books. This may partly account for a fact that has already been mentioned, namely that English composers wrote scarcely any madrigals of importance until the last decade of the century, whereas Italian activity dates from half a century before that. In Italy there was a steady output of printed music-books throughout those fifty years. The earliest known set of English printed music books was that issued by Wynkyn de Worde in 1530. It was not followed by any further secular musical publication until Thomas Whythorne's set of *Songes of three fower and five voyces* were issued in 1571; Whythorne's was the only secular set of English music books published between de Worde's set in 1530 and Byrd's first set in 1588. The publication of church music in the same period was of very little more importance; John Merbecke's *Booke of Common Praier noted* can scarcely be said to belong to this class of publications; and the only other printed music books belonging to that period were

John Day's *Certaine Notes set forth in four and three partes to be sung at the Morning, Communion and Evening Prayer*, which contain three services and about twenty anthems, were published in 1560 and 1565, and the set of *Cantiones Sacrae* issued jointly by Tallis and Byrd under their own special patent in 1575. The granting of this special privilege, amounting to a kind of printing monopoly, seems to have exerted a most important influence upon English music. The Tallis-Byrd *cantiones* were published in the same year that the royal licence was granted to them; for some years this licence was a source of loss rather than profit, and it was not until 1588, the year of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, that the great series of publications made under this monopoly was begun; but during the following thirty or forty years the music books printed in England cover not only the whole of the splendid English madrigal school, but also the *Ayres* of Dowland, Campian, and the rest of the lutenists, and a large amount of church music, including the two sets of *Cantiones sacrae*, the two sets of *Gradualia*, and the three Masses of Byrd, besides Leighton's *Teares or Lamentacions of a Sorrowfull Soule*, Amner's *Sacred Hymnes of* 3, 4, 5, *and* 6 *parts*, East's *Whole Booke of Psalmes*, and several English anthems in the madrigal sets. After the death of Tallis the printing rights became vested solely in Byrd, and he assigned the right of printing the books to Thomas East, whose name was also found in the forms Este and Est. East produced a large number of the madrigal sets; his dwelling-house was 'by Paules wharfe' in 1588, and by 1594 he had moved to 'Aldersgate-streete, at the signe of the black horse'.

Byrd's licence expired in the year 1596, and two years later Thomas Morley was granted a fresh patent; the printers he employed being East, Short, and Barley. At Morley's death the patent passed into the hands of Barley, whose 'shoppe'

was in 'Gratious Street'; but many of the madrigal sets continued to be printed by East. By the year 1609 East had died, and his printing business was taken over by Thomas Snodham, whose name first appears in Wilbye's second set of madrigals; after this date most of the subsequent madrigal sets were printed by him, the last of them being Pilkington's second set in 1624.

This printing monopoly not only applied to music but also to music paper, for it gave the holders the sole right to 'rule and cause to be ruled by impression any paper to serve for printing or pricking of any songe or songes', and to sell 'any bookes or quieres of such ruled paper imprinted'. An example of this music-paper may be seen in Thomas Hunt's autograph of his service written about the year 1600, each page of which bears the imprint of East's initials.[1]

The Elizabethan part-books were well printed, and the degree of accuracy which was secured is astonishing. Byrd commented on the excellence of the printers' work in the 'Epistle to the Reader' at the beginning of his *Psalmes Sonets and Songs* in 1588. Byrd was well aware that some of the discords he had written would be new to those who would sing from the part-books, and that they might be tempted to explain them away as misprints; and so he wrote: 'if ther happen to be any jarre or dissonance, blame not the Printer, who (I doe assure thee) through his great paines and diligence doth heere deliver thee a perfect and true Coppie.' This publication was the first of the English madrigal publications, but the high level of excellence which Byrd applauded was maintained right through the series, and it is surprising how few misprints are to be found in the part-books as a whole.

The contents of the part-books may be briefly described. Each book in a set contained a duplicate of all the preliminary

[1] Tenbury MS. 787.

matter, which consisted of a title-page and an elaborate form of dedication to some special patron, and this was usually printed on the back of the title-page. Sometimes laudatory verses were included from the pen of the composer's admirers. A table of contents and an index were always put in.

Many of the title-pages were ornamented with borders of lace design characteristic of the period, but more elaborate designs in the Renaissance style were sometimes used. The printers kept stock plates of these, and the design was not specially drafted with reference to the contents of the book. The Renaissance wood-cut used for Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Musicke* (1597) is also to be seen in Dowland's *First Booke of Songes or Ayres* (1597), but it was probably made for neither of them. There is an interesting woodcut border on the title-page of Ward's madrigals, but this was evidently designed for some book of sermons or theological work. 'Justice', 'Mercy', 'Fortitude', and 'Prudence' have a place in the border, and at the foot of the page is the picture of a preacher discoursing to his congregation. The title-page of Morley's *Canzonets selected from Italian authors* (1597) was in the Renaissance style; on the centre panels at the sides are the initials P. S. for Peter Short the printer; on panels at the four corners are four women in the attitude of prayer, and at the top is a sacred emblem; perched above are two plumage birds. The inappropriateness of the design does not seem to have been considered. The title-page of Tomkins's set in 1622 is inferior to these but also in Renaissance style.

Morley's *Booke of Balletts* (1595) bears a curious emblem on the title-page showing a rake, a fork, and a scythe, bound with a ribbon bearing the motto, *sed adhuc mea messis in herba est*. The device on the title-page of Byrd's *Psalmes, Sonets, & Songs* (1588) has in its centre a hart, the crest of

Sir Christopher Hatton, to whom the set was dedicated. Sometimes the coat of arms of the composer's patron was represented; in Bateson's second set (1618) the coat of arms of Lord Chichester with fourteen quarterings, together with supporters, crest, and motto, was printed on the back of the title-page; in this set the lace-border was of unusual pattern.

The dedicatory addresses of the composers to their patrons were always worded in a style of what we to-day would think fulsome flattery, and in a deprecatory attitude towards the merits of their own music which gives the impression of being over-done. From this convention of the time it was not apparently possible, even for men like Byrd and Gibbons, to depart. These addresses frequently contain little pieces of information about the personal history of the composers. 'Addresses to the Reader' were occasionally added; these are always interesting, and none more so than those of Byrd, who inserted one in each of his three sets; at the conclusion of that in *Songs of sundrie Natures*, he signed himself 'the most affectionate freend to all that love or learne Musicke', a phrase that brings him very close to musicians of all time. Byrd's well-known 'Reasons briefly set down by th'auctor, to perswade every one to learne to sing' were printed in addition to 'The Epistle to the Reader' in his 1588 set.

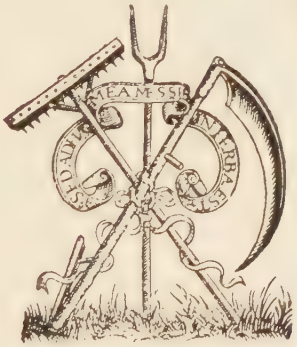
Laudatory poems were comparatively scarce in the madrigal books, though they were more common in the song-books of the lutenists. Tomkins was praised in verse by his brother John, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral. There are as many as four short poems at the beginning of Farnaby's canzonets; these include one by John Dowland and one by Richard Alison, the madrigalist, and one in Latin elegiacs by Anthony Holborne. Pilkington, in his second set, included two sonnets in his praise, one by William Webbe and one by Henry Harpur. Lichfild's

QVINTVS.

OF THOMAS MORLEY

THE FIRST BOOKE OF BALLETTS TO FIVE VOYCES.

LA DANCE Bibl Boel



IN LONDON
BY THOMAS ESTE.
CIↃ. IↃ. XC. V.

Title-page of Morley's *Book of Ballets*, 1595

set has two sonnets by Christopher Brooke, one to his patroness, Lady Cheney, and the other 'To the Author upon his Musicall Muse'. In Morley's four-part madrigals was a poem in his praise signed *Incerto*, and the lines 'to the author' in his *Book of Ballets*, signed 'M.D.', are generally thought to be by Michael Drayton :

> Such was old Orpheus cunning,
> That senseless things drew neere him,
> And heards of beastes to heare him,
> The stock, the stone, the Oxe, the Asse came running.
> Morley ! but this enchaunting
> To thee, to be the Musick-God is wanting.
> And yet thou need'st not feare him ;
> Draw thou the Shepherds still and Bonny-lasses,
> And envie him not stocks, stones, Oxen, Asses.

The initial letters of each madrigal were often elaborate. Some were ornamented with floral and symmetrical designs, and occasionally set in small woodcut landscape scenes ; these were part of the printer's stock-in-trade, and had no reference to the subject of the madrigals. It was usual to occupy each page of text with a single madrigal ; more space was seldom required, and each madrigal began on a fresh page even if the previous page was only partially used. A set of part-books was usually made up of between twenty and thirty madrigals.

There were no bars in the part-books. When a verbal phrase was immediately repeated, it was the custom not to print the words a second time but simply to put the figure ii or the sign :// under the succeeding group of notes. As a rule the position in which the unprinted words were to be placed under the notes was obvious, but occasionally when there were more notes than syllables, it becomes a matter for discretion to decide how the words were intended by the composer to underlay the notes, and this calls for special knowledge of the Tudor idiom, which, it is important to state,

differs considerably in this detail from that of modern times. To an Elizabethan singer this arrangement would have presented no difficulty. The part-books contain no 'expression' marks or directions as to *tempo*, such points being left to the performers. No titles are given to the madrigals at the top of each page, but only the reference number in accordance with the table of contents. Nor are the names of the authors of the lyrics ever stated in the part-books.

d. *Rhythm and underlaying*

A true understanding of the principles upon which the English madrigal composers worked in the matter of rhythm forms the true and only foundation for a right interpretation of this music. This statement applies not only to the English madrigals but also to the church music belonging to the same period. Freedom of rhythm also characterized the polyphonic music of the Flemings, the Italians, and the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, but the English composers undoubtedly worked with greater freedom in this respect than their continental contemporaries.

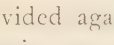
It is a strange circumstance that this marked character of sixteenth-century music should have been replaced so completely before the close of another century by regularity and square-cut design; in some ways it is even more strange that musicians should have ceased to recognize the rhythmic freedom of the Elizabethan music, and that they should have misinterpreted it, on the rare occasions when they performed it at all, by imposing on it a regular and even flow of accent, such as controlled the music of their own day, in direct conflict with the true verbal accentuation and the obvious intention of the Elizabethans.

It must be recalled that the course of English history during the seventeenth century dealt a very hard blow at music, and

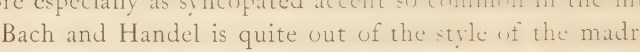
especially polyphonic music. The death of Elizabeth was the first misfortune that befell it, for the accession of James I brought to the court a meaner influence which made itself felt in all grades of society, and music lost much of the valuable support that the Tudor sovereigns had given to it. Yet the force of the great wave of musical enthusiasm which was at its height at the turn of the century could not be spent in a single moment, and its influence certainly continued to be felt until the reign of Charles I. Then followed the great political upheaval which so seriously affected all the Arts as well as the domestic life of the country throughout the middle of the century, and music suffered more than all its fellows; music books and organs were ruthlessly destroyed, church music was forbidden by authority, and fanatics in certain quarters taught that all forms of music and dancing were sinful.

With the Restoration came a great revival, and for a short period towards the close of the seventeenth century England seemed likely to reassert the supremacy in music that she had held in Elizabethan days. Two great names stand out conspicuously, those of John Blow and his still more famous pupil, Henry Purcell. But fine as their music was, it was essentially different from that of the older school. No one should deplore this fact, for music is nothing if it is not progressive; but it is possible to be progressive without wholly ignoring the merits of earlier work, and it happened that musical England in the days of Charles II and his brother James gave itself exclusively to the attractions of contemporary production. The effect of this upon the practice of Tudor music when attempts to revive it were made by small bodies of enthusiasts in the eighteenth century was disastrous, for the most important traditions connected with it had been hopelessly lost, and the life-giving source of it, namely, the true

principles of rhythmic interpretation, had disappeared in the mists of obscurity. Revivals of madrigal singing throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, praiseworthy as they were, never proved a popular success for the sole reason that the rhythms were misunderstood and false accentuation was the result. Often the remedy was sought, not in more careful study of the original text, but in shifting the words and otherwise tampering with the text.

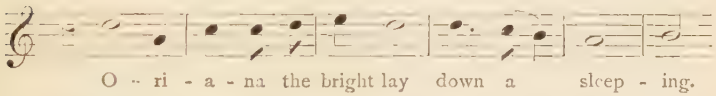
What then is rhythm? And what were the special features of rhythmic construction in the madrigals? Rhythm has been cleverly defined as 'melody stripped of its pitch'; in other words, it is the shape of a melody as represented by the reiteration of a single note. It has been said that any characteristic melody can be readily recognized by the beating of its rhythm with the finger on a table. If there are some first-rate melodies which could not be identified, it is certainly true that many can, and, incidentally, it makes a very good game for musical children. The rhythm of the great classical period on the Continent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was regular in its periods. If the measure was duple, the accents fell regularly on the first beat of a bar with a secondary accent on the third; if the measure was triple there was but one accent in each bar. A melody consisted ordinarily of eight bars, which were naturally subdivided into two measures of four bars, subdivided again into measures of two bars each. Within these limits any rhythmic figure was possible that did not conflict with the regular periodic-beats; thus in duple time  makes up one bar of four crotchets length, and although it has a very distinctive shape, yet it is capable of strict treatment in conformity with the eight-bar system. On the other hand, the following rhythmic figure taken from Thomas Morley's work

will not conform to the regular periodic flow of duple measure :

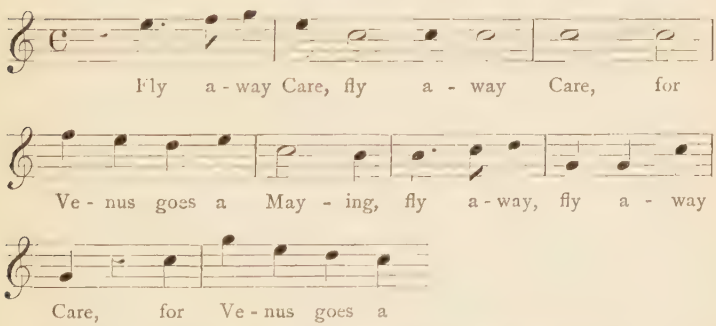


more especially as syncopated accent so common in the music of Bach and Handel is quite out of the style of the madrigal composers. The eight-bar scheme produced a beautiful symmetry and regularity of design, and it became a leading feature of the sonata form as developed by the great classical composers. But the method of the polyphonic composers had no such regular basis ; the symmetrical scheme was indeed beginning to shape itself in some of the 'Ayres' of the song-writers at the end of the sixteenth century : and, moreover, many of the popular melodies of a still earlier date fall into eight-bar lengths, as in the case of more modern melodies. But the polyphonic music, with the exception of the ballet, which in this particular is so clearly differentiated from the true madrigal, were perfectly free in this respect ; a very large measure of freedom in designing rhythmic figures was possible for the sixteenth-century composers, for they knew of no convention demanding that the accentuation should conform to any regular pulsation of alternate beats. This enabled each single voice part to progress with perfect rhythmic freedom and with constant change of measure in accordance with the true accentuation of the words. It was thus also possible for each individual voice to observe an absolute independence of the others' rhythm if required to do so, instead of confining rhythmic variety to changes in all the voice parts simultaneously. The immense advantages of rhythmic freedom in a single voice part will be obvious from one or two examples. The first is a simple example from Wilbye's *Happy, O happy he* :

There were, of course, no bars in the original part-books; they are added in the examples by the present writer to indicate the rhythmic outline of the passages; it will readily be seen how these three changes of measure give freedom to the musical recitation of the words. Another good example may be quoted from Morley's *Hard by a crystal fountain*:



The wide possibilities of this system are obvious. A very fascinating and suggestive example of freedom of rhythm is to be found in the opening bars of East's *Fly away, Care*:



Scarcely a madrigal exists in which the rhythm is not frequently changed in all the voice parts, and even when it may seem to be following a regular duple measure a stronger accent may often be found on the third beat of a bar than on the first, or the rhythm may be of six crotchets length with accents on alternate beats. In passages of long sustained notes, as well as in the more rapid passages, it will usually be found after careful observation that some definite rhythmic pattern is being followed. It cannot be too often repeated

that no bars at all were printed in the original part-books; their insertion in modern printed scores is only intended to give guidance to the eye, and they must not be regarded as invariably controlling the rhythmic outline.

As already stated, it was possible for each voice part to follow an independent rhythmic outline regardless of what any other voice may have been doing. The system of introducing complex and overlapping rhythms may most simply be explained by a chart showing the variety of grouping into which a sequence of twelve equal notes may be divided:

Further possibilities of a very complex kind are opened by interweaving some of these four schemes of subdivision. There is occasionally great complexity of rhythmic device to be found in these madrigals, notably in Byrd's *The match that 's made for just and true respects*, and in some of Farnaby's canzonets. But complicated rhythmic design can sometimes go beyond the bounds of the highest kind of Art, and it was this occasional extravagance which brought the simpler form of the 'Ayre' into popularity. Yet when skilfully handled a fine effect is produced by the employment of complex rhythms. A splendid example of such an effect is provided by Byrd's *Though Amaryllis dance in green*,[1] in which the rhythm sometimes changes in all the parts simultaneously, but more often the $\frac{3}{2}$ and the $\frac{6}{4}$ rhythms run counter to each other.

[1] Those who cannot perform the very difficult feat of singing this madrigal may study its effects as recorded for the Gramophone Company (H. M. V.) by 'The English Singers'.

It will be seen at once how scrupulously careful the madrigal composers were in the handling of their words; and it will also become clear that the true accentuation of the words as they would be pronounced when well spoken is the infallible guide to correct rhythmic interpretation of the music of the madrigals. Rhythm is without doubt the feature which above all others characterizes and vitalizes Tudor music, and ability to recognize it and to interpret it in all its subtle and varied and, sometimes, elaborate forms is a quality which a madrigal singer must of necessity be able to command.

Now since the true accentuation of the words is the only real guide to correct rhythmic interpretation, it is necessary to say something about the peculiarity of the principles followed by the Tudor musicians in the matter of 'underlaying' the words. The term 'underlaying' has been borrowed, for lack of a better one, from the Germans, who use the term *unterlegten* with this special technical meaning, namely how each syllable of the words is to be placed under the music notes for singing.

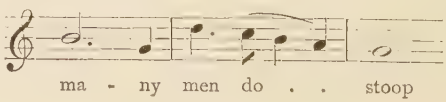
The Tudor convention was very different from that of later days. In the part-books there are scarcely any instances at all in which slurs were printed to show how the words were to be grouped when more than one note was available for each syllable of the words. The only indication on this point is the position in which the words are placed in the books in relation to the notes. For many generations it was supposed that the printers were very careless in this matter, this being the only explanation that could be offered by those who looked for principles in word-underlaying similar to those with which they were familiar in contemporary vocal music. Careful criticism should have revealed the fact that these errors, as they supposed them to be, follow a very definite principle, seeing that the position of the words is remarkably accurate in all the English printed part-books, and that close study of

the subject makes it abundantly clear that the Tudor musicians had methods of their own which they followed uniformly. There are indeed a few instances in which a word has been misplaced, and the error can generally be detected by comparison with identical phrases in the other voice parts; and sometimes the type used for the words is too large in comparison with the music type, and on this account ambiguity or uncertainty may occasionally be met with; but the high praise which Byrd bestowed upon the music-printers is just as much earned by their underlaying of the text as it is by their note accuracy.

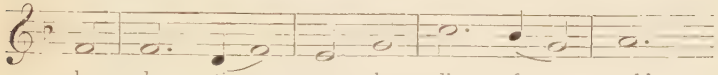
The practices which a careful student of the madrigal part-books must inevitably recognize are more clearly illustrated by the manuscript part-books containing the church music of the same period. For whereas there are almost no such marks in the secular printed books, the church music manuscripts are rather copiously marked with slurs. And the principles, which are thus indicated beyond all possible doubt, agree precisely with the placing that was used to be thought careless in the printed books.

It will only be possible briefly to mention here some of the characteristic features of Elizabethan underlaying. The composers showed a strong reluctance to divide a group of four equal notes into two equal pairs with a syllable to each; their custom was to detach the first or the fourth note of the group and tie the other three; for example in Wilbye's *Stay, Corydon*:

And in Byrd's *The greedy hawk*



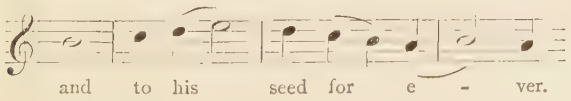
It was almost invariable to slur a triple phrase beginning with a dotted note, as in this passage from Byrd's *I thought that love had been a boy* :



The following example from Weelkes's *A sparrow-hawk proud*, illustrates two points : first, the custom of throwing back a syllable to the end of the previous bar instead of introducing a new syllable on a strong rhythmic position ; and secondly, that of giving a long phrase to a single unimportant syllable :

The avoidance of the consonant on the strong position of the phrase overcomes the slight interruption which the pronunciation of a consonant cannot avoid, and the prolongation of the short syllable excites an expectation which gives emphasis to the strong syllable when it is finally reached.

The slur-marks in the early manuscript part-books in Durham Cathedral and Peterhouse are very copious ; the practice of introducing syllables on the weak rhythmic position by preference seems occasionally to be carried to the verge of excess in those particular books, and it is not impossible that the convention became exaggerated at Durham in the seventeenth century. This passage in Farrant's *Magnificat* in A minor (printed a tone lower by Boyce) suggests an extravagance in this detail :



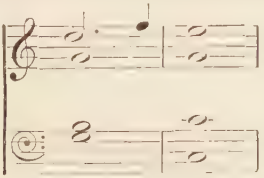
But many similar examples undoubtedly representing general practice are accurately reproduced in the Carnegie edition of *Tudor Church Music*, and the reader is referred to these. It is unfortunate that the large majority of nineteenth-century editors showed a complete disregard for the characteristic manner of sixteenth-century singing; the madrigals and church music alike lose a large part of their flavour if the position of the words and the rhythmic pattern are changed in accordance with modern convention. It is not a question of what we may prefer or what we are accustomed to, but of what the Tudor musicians deliberately intended to be sung.

e. *Harmony*

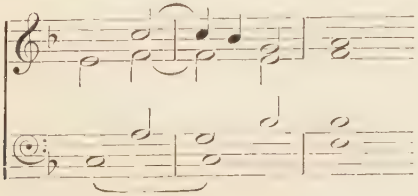
The highly technical subject of the harmony and counterpoint of the Elizabethan musicians has been discussed in the present writer's *English Madrigal Composers*, and still more fully in Mr. R. O. Morris's *Contrapuntal Technique in the Sixteenth Century*; it will therefore be unnecessary to give more than passing attention to it here. Mr. Morris has rightly observed that 'harmonic purity and rhythmical freedom are the most important lessons we have to learn from the sixteenth century', and it must be stated at the outset that the use of chromatic harmonies by the madrigalists was comparatively exceptional; some composers made more use of them than others, but whenever they were introduced it was with a view to producing a special effect, as when a painter reserves the use of a particular pigment of telling qualities for a single point in his picture. The use of chromatic harmonies by the Elizabethan composers had until recently been entirely overlooked, and since attention has been drawn to them there are signs of some tendency to over-emphasize their importance; for example, there are people who, having been shown the amazing chromatic harmonies used by Weelkes in *O Care, thou*

wilt despatch me : Cease, sorrowes, now : Thule : and other of his madrigals, will affect 'not to recognize the real Weelkes' in his more diatonic work. Taken as a whole, the harmony of the madrigalists is of a diatonic character and of the purity of a crystal stream. Nevertheless, when all the isolated examples of chromatic harmony are collected from the English madrigals and tabulated, it is certainly surprising to note how many so-called modern chords are actually to be found in the music of this date. The chord of the augmented fifth was by far the most used of all the chromatic chords by the madrigalists. It was scarcely ever used by the austere Byrd, and never at all by the merry-minded yet scholarly Morley, but it is not infrequently found in that other severely dispositioned musician, Orlando Gibbons, in the great stylist, John Wilbye, in the imaginative and unconventional Weelkes, and in many of the minor lights. A few examples also occur of chords of the augmented sixth, of the Neapolitan sixth, and even of the diminished seventh.

The dominant seventh was also freely introduced by these composers, often without preparation. The following cadence is not uncommon in Byrd's church music as well as in his madrigals :



And all these composers were fond of the beautiful cadence :

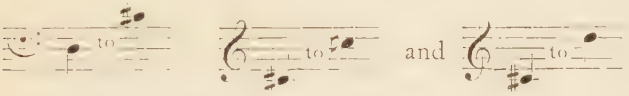


the free resolution of the dominant seventh in this instance is usually explained on the ground of the omission of the sixth in the chain of passing notes. The dominant seventh was used as an ordinary passing note in almost every cadence, but in no instance was the chord of the dominant seventh used as an independent chord in a strong rhythmic position as it was after the turn of the century, nor was it used in any other than the root position by the madrigalists; that particular harmonic discovery properly belonging to Monteverde and the Italians.

Although Byrd seldom showed any taste for chromatic harmony, he was one of the most original and unconventional of all the Elizabethans in introducing what he himself described as 'jarre and dissonance'. Not all these effects are satisfactory to modern ears, but the actual clash of the major and minor thirds, and many of those progressions which involve what later theorists called false relations, would have fallen less harshly on the ears of the Elizabethans, to whom the principles of equal temperament were practically unknown. Kirbye and Carlton were two other madrigalists who followed Byrd in this particular direction.

A very individual style of harmony was developed by Ward; his treatment of suspensions is unlike anything else in the work of the English madrigalists, and in his five- and six-part madrigals some very massive harmonic effects are produced by double and triple suspensions. For example in *Out from the vale of deep despair*:

In the matter of progressions examples of the step of almost every interval are to be found in the works of the madrigalists ; for instance, the augmented second is occasionally found, and such intervals as :



as well as skips of a tenth occur, while is quite common.

Dealing with the conventional rules, Morley in his *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* forbade the use of consecutive fifths and octaves, and very few, if any, breaches of this rule are to be found in the works of Morley himself, or in those of Byrd, Wilbye, Weelkes, and Orlando Gibbons ; yet none of these had the slightest hesitation in writing consecutive fifths or octaves on similar beats of a bar with a single chord in between, though this practice was sternly forbidden by the eighteenth-century theorists, and many similar rules evolved by the later contrapuntists are not supported by the practice of the Elizabethans. Giles Farnaby seemed to have no scruple in writing actual fifths occasionally, and instances of such progressions as these occur at times in the madrigals of most of these composers ; it cannot be supposed that they are all due to oversight, still less to incompetence, and their existence affords additional evidence of the spirit of nonconformity in musical matters which was so prevalent at this period.

Enough has been said to indicate the individuality of the technique of the English madrigalists and to show that their music is very far from being academic or conventional. On the contrary it is intensely imaginative and original, although

preserving in the main that harmonic purity which Mr. Morris so wisely commends. Whatever vein they wrote in, whether in gaiety, light humour, satire, vigour, tenderness, sadness, emotion, or religious expression, their music responds to all demands, with perfect fitness and never-failing dignity. For this reason it ranks as first-rate art and is as full of vitality to-day as it was three hundred years ago.

3
The Words

The madrigal composers had the incalculable advantage of having an unlimited fund of first-rate poetry to set to music, since they were the contemporaries of Shakespeare and of those other dramatists and poets who with him made the Elizabethan period the golden age of English literature. As previously stated, the names of those who wrote the words of the madrigals were never recorded in the part-books ; but it has been possible to identify the authorship of a small proportion of the poems, because some of them are to be found elsewhere than in the madrigal books in a connexion that provides indisputable evidence of authorship. Often the text of the music-books, which has the value of being contemporary with the poets' work, varies in important details from the text which has been handed down to us from other sources, and this lends an additional interest to it. The variants seldom suggest that the text of the song-books is the most authentic, and it would seem that the words were often carelessly transcribed, or else that the composer wrote them down from recollection with the natural result that inaccuracies crept in. But in handling the text of the song-books a principle must be observed which is not always quite clearly recognized by those whose interests in this matter are solely literary, namely that although truer

and more authentic text may be available from other sources, the text, as it appears in the music books must be retained whenever it is reproduced specifically in connexion with or in reference to music.

A good example of the textual corruption which is occasionally to be found in the song-books may be quoted from Martin Peerson's motets No. 11, where the word *fleet* occurs. This is clearly a mistake for *flesh*, which is found in Greville's poem elsewhere; yet *fleet*—whatever it may have meant to him—was undoubtedly the word which Peerson had before him, because it is deliberately so printed in all the separate part-books of this composition. Again, it has been suggested in Bennet's short madrigal on falconry that *die, fearful ducks* should properly be *dive, fearful ducks*; the suggestion may be right, yet it remains a fact that all four part-books read *die*, and no modern editor would be justified in altering it; moreover, no other text of this line is known to exist. An interesting example of this kind of textual criticism is provided in Bateson's *Sadness, sit down*. The second line is difficult to construe, and the meaning turns largely on the punctuation. The best punctuation seems to be *Tear up thought's tomb, a numbed heart*. The composer has divided up the phrase thus: *Tear up thoughts, tomb a numbed heart*, which seems to make no sense at all, and he treats the word *tomb* as a verb. This is not merely a question of punctuation in the madrigal, for the two limbs of the sentence are each repeated separately in all the parts, and several beats' rest divide them in the music. It is one of those cases which cannot be judged and settled solely from a literary standpoint, nor without due regard to the musician's very deliberate construction with all its peculiarities and difficulties. But a large number of alterations of a minor kind were intentionally made by the musical composers. One reason for this was that a whole line of poetry

was generally too long for the kind of short musical phrases which characterized the structure of a madrigal, and consequently a verbal phrase had sometimes to be split up; the natural result of this was that the musician would sometimes transpose words, and these very often became more isolated from their context owing to their being repeated several times in accordance with the structure of the music. This indeed led to another type of verbal alteration, because the imitative entries often had the effect of making the musical phrases longer in some voice-parts than in others, and some verbal padding was required; further repetition of a single word or two generally met this requirement, but certain composers did not hesitate to add fresh epithets or small interjections on their own account when they needed more verbal material for a musical phrase. None of the English madrigalists exercised so much freedom in this matter as Morley, but a few examples of this practice are to be found in the work of the majority of them.

Among the poets whose words were set as madrigals were Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, Michael Drayton, Thomas Campian, Walter and Francis Davison, Joshua Sylvester, Greville Lord Brooke, John Donne, Sir Edward Dyer, Francis Kindlemarch, Vere Earl of Oxford, Walter Raleigh, Samuel Daniel, Chideock Tichborne, Nicholas Breton, and others. There is no known example of any of Shakespeare's words being set as a madrigal, though the authorship of *The Passionate Pilgrim* in Barnefield's Miscellany used at one time to be attributed to Shakespeare; Weelkes set three stanzas of the poem *My flocks feed not* from *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and it is interesting to notice that this madrigal was published in 1597, two years before Barnefield's Miscellany appeared. The fact that the authorship of the poems has been identified in so many cases leads to the inference

that many more of the poems used by the madrigalists must be by the same authors; and it is perhaps not too much to suppose that all the poets of the day, including Shakespeare, must be represented in the large anonymous collection of English verse which has been preserved in the madrigal part-books. The whole of the poems of the madrigals were collected and edited by the present author, and published under the title of *English Madrigal Verse*.[1]

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

The taste of the madrigalists in selecting their words varied very much. Byrd and Orlando Gibbons, both of whom were of an especially serious disposition, with scarcely any exception chose poetry of the first order. It is sometimes stated that Gibbons's reference to Sir Christopher Hatton in his dedication implies that Hatton wrote the words of his madrigals; but that this was not so we know, because several of the lyrics are indisputably by other authors—four by Joshua Sylvester, two more from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, one usually attributed to John Donne, and another to Sir Walter Raleigh. It is possible, on the other hand, that Hatton chose the poems for

[1] Oxford, at the Clarendon Press.

Gibbons. Ward was another composer who wrote several madrigals to words whose authors can be identified; he seems to have had a special fancy for the words of Michael Drayton, possibly a personal friend of his; but his book also includes poems by the Davisons and Sidney, who was indeed a favourite with many of these composers.

The poetry set by the madrigal composers deals with every variety of subject and all the phases of the life of the period. The pastoral treatment of the love-making and dancing of the nymphs and shepherds naturally finds a large place in this field; but, being the most conventional of subjects, it provides the least interesting poetry, and sometimes the words for these conceits are little more than doggerel, made up with rhymes of *cruel* and *jewel*, or *anguish* and *languish*. Sometimes, it is true, reputable authors were responsible for these jingles; Francis Davison, for example, wrote the following lines set by Robert Jones:

> Your presence breeds my anguish,
> Your absence makes me languish,
> Your sight with woe doth fill me,
> And want of your sweet sight, alas, doth kill me.

But sometimes these conventional love-lyrics were prettily turned, as in this example from Lichfild's set:

> I always loved to call my lady Rose;
> For in her cheeks do roses sweetly glose,
> And from her lips she such sweet odours threw
> As roses do 'gainst Phoebus' morning view.
> But when I thought to pull't, hope was bereft me,
> My Rose was gone and nought but prickles left me.

This is, of course, a long way behind Campian's beautiful lines which were set by several musicians of the period:

> There is a garden in her face
> Where roses and white lilies grow;
> A heavenly paradise is that place
> Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.

There cherries grow that none may buy
Till 'cherry ripe' themselves do cry.

Any of the well-known Elizabethan poets might have written the words of the two following madrigals of Bateson, which remain anonymous:

Have I found her? O rich finding!
Goddess-like for to behold,
Her fair tresses seemly binding
In a chain of pearl and gold.
Chain me, chain me, O most fair,
Chain me to thee with that hair.

And

Sister, awake, close not your eyes,
The day her light discloses;
And the bright morning doth arise
Out of her bed of roses.
See the clear sun, the world's bright eye,
In at our window peeping,
Lo, how he blusheth to espy
Us idle wenches sleeping.
Therefore awake, make haste, I say,
And let us without staying
All in our gowns of green so gay
Into the park a-maying.

The May-day revels to which this last lyric refers were kept up with great gaiety in Elizabethan days. The custom of going 'a-maying' was a very ancient one, and is said to be founded on the Roman *Floralia*, or floral games, which began on April 28th. In Elizabethan days it was customary for the entire populace to go out at an early hour and gather flowers and hawthorn blossom; the festivities included much dancing and merry-making, and the final ceremony of bringing home the May was brought to a climax by the choice of the fairest maid of the village as May-Queen. Every house in the village was decked out with May-blossom and the evening ceremonies centred round the May-pole, which was a permanent fixture

in the village. It is recorded that Henry VIII and Catherine of Arragon went from Greenwich one May morning to greet the London folk who had come out to gather May on Shooter's Hill. Chaucer in his *Court of Love* wrote: 'Forth goeth all the Court, both most and least, to fetch the flowers fresh.' May-day is finely described by Spenser in the *Shepherd's Calendar*:

> Is not thilke the merrie month of May,
> When love-lads masken in fresh aray?
> How falles it then, we no merrier béne,
> Ylike as others, girt in gawdie gréene?
> Our blonket liveries bene all too sad
> For thilke same season, when all is yclad
> With pleasance, the ground with grasse, the woods
> With gréene leaves, ye bushes with bloosming buds.
> Youthes folke now flocken in every where
> To gather May-buskets, and smelling Bréere:
> And home they hasten the posts to dight
> And all the Kirke pillers ere day light,
> With Hawthorne buds, and swéete Eglantine,
> And girlonds of Roses, and Sops in wine.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Siker this morrow, ne lenger ago,
> I saw a shole of shepheards out go,
> With singing, and showting, and iolly cheere:
> Before them yode a lustie Tabrere,
> That to the manie a horne pype plaide,
> Whereto they dauncen each one with his maide.
> To sée those folkes make such iouisaunce
> Made my heart after the pype to daunce.
> Tho to the gréene wood they spéeden them all,
> To fetchen home May with their musicall:
> And home they bringen in a royall throne,
> Crowned as king: and his Queene attone
> Was Ladie *Flora*, on whom did attend
> A faire flocke of Faeries, and a fush bend
> Of lovely Nymphs. (O that I were there
> To help the ladies their Maybush to beare!)

The madrigals are, of course, teeming with May-day subjects. May-day is the theme of Morley's famous ballet, *Now is the month of Maying*, and there is another typical May-day madrigal in Weelkes's six-part set :

Why are you ladies staying
And your lords gone a-maying?
Run, run apace and meet them
And with your garlands greet them;
'Twere pity they should miss you
For they will sweetly kiss you.

Hark! hark! I hear some dancing
And a nimble morris prancing.
The bagpipe and the morris bells
That they are not far hence us tells.
Come let us all go thither
And dance like friends together.

The morris dancers provided another favourite subject. Morley's boisterous *Ho! who comes here?* is perhaps the finest example of this kind, but Weelkes's *Lo! country sports* gives another gay picture of similar scenes. Wedding festivities also provided good matter for the madrigal. A most picturesque and brilliant representation of wedding revelries is to be found, for instance, in Morley's *Arise, get up, my dear* :

Arise, get up, my dear, make haste, begone thee!
Lo where the bride, fair Daphne, tarries on thee!
Hark! yon merry wanton maidens squealing:
'Spice cake, sops in wine, see now a dealing.'
Then run apace,
Get a bride-lace
And a gilt rosemary branch while yet there is catching,
And then hold fast for fear of old snatching.
Alas, my love, why weep she?
O fear not that the next day keep we.
Hark yon minstrels! List, how fine they firk it!
And see how the maids jerk it!

With Kate and Will,
Tom and Jill.
Now a trip,
Then a skip,
Finely set aloft,
Now again as oft.
Heigh ho! fine brave holiday!
All for fair Daphne's wedding day!

Closely associated with the May-day festivities were the *Robin Hood* games, the principal actors in which were chosen from the community by popular vote. Refusal to obey the call was punishable by fines and other penalties, a system whereby notable people sometimes found themselves in an undignified position. The plight of Francis Bothwell early in the sixteenth century is quaintly described in Napier's *Memoirs of John Napier of Merchistoun*; it is stated that Bothwell, when a baillie of Edinburgh in 1518, declined to take the part of 'Litil John' for which he was elected, as not being agreeable to his habits and tastes, and he was actually obliged to petition 'my Lord Erle of Aranis' to 'excuse him fra the office of litil Johne'. Arran replied: 'President, ballies and counsall of Edinburgh we greit you weill; It is understand to us that Maister Francis Boithwell your nichtbour, is chosin to be litil Johne for to mak sportis and joscositeis in the toune, the quhilk is a man to be usit in hiear and gravar materis . . . quharfor we request and prayis, and als chargis you that ye hald him excusit at this tyme.' The traditional scenes connected with Robin Hood, Little John, Maid Marian, and Friar Tuck were roughly enacted on the village greens, and not a little horseplay was introduced, in which the whole of the community joined. In Elizabethan times the Robin Hood characters were often impersonated by the parties of mummers on their visits to the villages and the large houses.

One of Weelkes's *Ayeres or Phantasticke Spirites* carries an allusion to the Robin Hood games:

Since Robin Hood, Maid Marian
And Little John are gone-a,
The hobby-horse was quite forgot
When Kempe did dance alone-a.

The Kempe mentioned here was a well-known actor, who played Dogberry at the first production of *Much Ado about*

WILLIAM KEMPE. From the woodcut prefixed to Kempe's *Nine Daies Wonder*, 1600

Nothing; and his name, both in the Quarto and Folio texts of that play (Act v, Sc. 2), was accidentally substituted for that of Dogberry. He was also the original performer of the part of Peter in *Romeo and Juliet*. He shared with Richard Tarleton a great reputation for improvisation, and their tendency to 'gag' is thought to be referred to in *Hamlet* (Act III, Sc. 2): 'And let those that play your Clowns speak no more than is set down for them.' Kempe was even more famous for his dancing, and his *Nine Daies Wonder* gives a remarkable

description of his dance from London to Norwich, where he arrived successfully amid scenes of great gaiety and enthusiasm. On the title-page he is shown, with his taborer, in the complete outfit of a morris-dancer with napkins and bells, the former being fastened either to the shoulders or wrists of the dancer and used for the purpose of gesture.

Field sports, too, naturally find a place among the madrigals. Byrd, whose choice of words bears testimony to his fine taste in literature, wrote several madrigals containing allusions to sports. Some refer to hawking; this for example:

> The greedy hawk with sudden sight of lure
> Doth stoop in hope to have her wishèd prey.
> So many men do stoop to sights unsure
> And courteous speech doth keep them at the bay.
> Let them beware lest friendly looks be like
> The lure whereat the soaring hawk did strike.

Thomas Churchyard's lines—'Compel the hawk to sit that is unmanned' were also set by Byrd; and another of this composer's madrigals was 'If women could be fair and never fond', a poem by Vere, Earl of Oxford, the second stanza of which has in it several hawking terms. There is no gayer hunting scene in all the madrigal literature than that in Bateson's *Come, follow me*, and this is one of those madrigals in which the musician by his imaginative and pictorial handling of his resources adds not a little to the work of the poet.

> Come follow me, fair nymphs; hie! run apace!
> Diana, hunting, honoureth this chace.
> Softly! for fear her game we rouse
> Lodged in this grove of briars and boughs.
> Hark how the huntsmen winds their horns!
> See how the deer mounts o'er the thorns!
> The *White!* the *Black!* Oho, he pinched thee there!
> *Gowen* ran well, but *I love* killed the deer.

A typical Elizabethan conceit clothed with the phraseology of the law courts was set by Michael East as a madrigal :

My Hope a counsel with my Love
Hath long desired to be,
And marvels much so dear a friend
Is not retained by me.

She doth condemn my foolish haste
In passing the estate
Of my whole life into your hands
Who nought pays for't but hate.

And not sufficed with this, she says
I did release the right
Of my enjoyed liberties
Unto your beauteous sight.

Legal terms are also employed in several of Byrd's madrigals, notably in *Where Fancy found for Pleasure pleads* and Sir Philip Sidney's *O you that hear this voice* ; and the conventional gibe at the lawyer has not undergone much change in three centuries, as we see in the following stanza from Byrd's *What pleasure have great princes* in reference to shepherds :

For lawyers and their pleading
They esteem it not a straw ;
They think that honest meaning
Is of itself a law.
Where conscience judgeth plainly
They spend no money vainly.

Writing on the subject of madrigals some eighty years ago, that great enthusiast, Robert Lucas de Pearsall, himself the composer of many fine part-songs of a rather madrigalian kind, attempted to define the madrigal form, and named gaiety as being among its essential features. This statement is in

agreement with what many others have said both before and after Pearsall's time. Yet a cursory glance through the poetry of the English madrigal will show at once that it is at variance with the facts, and that it imposes a narrowing limit on the madrigal which the Elizabethan composers were very far from recognizing. The erroneous idea may have been based on the very limited material which for generations was available for the formation of a reasoned judgement on the subject. And it chanced that such madrigals as had come into use after the first revival in the middle of the eighteenth century and until as late as the last decade of the nineteenth, were almost entirely of a bright character. For example, most of *The Triumphes of Oriana* were known and enjoyed by the old-established madrigal societies, and formed a very large proportion of their English repertory; some twenty or thirty other favourites which may, at a liberal allowance, be said to have completed this repertory, were all drawn from among the gay numbers; typical of these were Wilbye's *Flora gave me fairest flowers: Sweet honey-sucking bees: Lady, when I behold:* Morley's *I follow to the footing:* Bateson's *Sister, awake*, and several of the ballets of Morley and Weelkes. More serious favourites were Gibbons's *The silver swan*, and Bennet's *Weep, O mine eyes*, which incidentally they changed to *Flow, O my tears* (modern words by Thomas Oliphant), for the sole reason that they also sang Wilbye's *Weep, O mine eyes*. The really serious madrigal was almost wholly neglected and unknown. Yet some of the very finest madrigals in existence are those set to words which would not possibly be described as bright or gay. It may be partly on account of this neglect that the outstanding merit of the Elizabethans has not until lately been recognized, and that the relative position of some of the principal madrigal composers has been

TO THE RIGHT HO. THE LORD
Charles Howard *Earle of Notingham, Bar-*
ron of Effingham, Knight of the Noble order of the
Garter, Lord high *Admirall* of *England, Ire-*
land, and *Wales, &c.* And one of her
Majesties most honorable
Priuie Counsell.

RIGHT HO.

I Haue aduentured to dedicate these few discordant tunes to be censured by the ingenious disposition of your Lordships Honorable rare perfection, perswading my selfe, that these labours, compoſed by me and others, (as in the surуey hereof, your Lordship may well perceiue) may not by any meanes passe, without the malignitie of some malitious *Momus*, whose malice (being as toothsome as the *Adders* sting) couched in the progres of a wayfayring mans passage, might make him retire though almost at his iourneyes end. Two speciall *Motiues* haue imbouldened me (right Honorable) in this my proceeding. First, for that I consider, that as the body cannot bee without the shadow: so *Homer* (the Prince of Poets) may not be without a *Zoilist*: The second & last is (the most forcible motiue) I know, (not onely by report, but also by experiment) your Lordship, to bee not onely *Philomusus* a louer of the *Muses*, and of learning: but *Philomathes*, a personage alway desirous, (though in all Arts sufficiently skilfull) to come to a more high perfection or *Summum bonum*. I will not trouble your Lordship with to to tedious circumstances, onely I humbly intreat your Lordship (in the name of many) to patronage this work with no lesse acceptance, then I with a willing and kinde hart dedicate it. So shall I think the *initium* of this worke not onely happely begun, but to bee *finited* with a more happie period.

Your Honours deuoted in all dutie,

Thomas Morley.

The Dedication to *The Triumphes of Oriana*

ELISABET D. G. ANG. FRAN. HIB. ET VERG REGINA
FIDEI CHRISTIANAE PROPVGNATRIX ACERRIMA

From an engraving by Crispin de Passe, 1592

sometimes misjudged. Many even of Wilbye's subjects were of a serious character, the finest, perhaps, being :

Happy, O happy he, who not affecting
The endless toils attending worldly cares,
With mind reposed, all discontents rejecting,
In silent peace his way to heaven prepares,
Deeming his life a scene, the world a stage
Whereon man acts his weary pilgrimage.

The author of these lines is unknown, but they are reminiscent of Shakespeare's *All the world's a stage*, and also of Raleigh's *What is our life?* the setting of which by Orlando Gibbons is one of the finest examples of a serious madrigal in existence. Another of Wilbye's severer madrigals is :

There is a jewel which no Indian mines
Can buy, no chimic art can counterfeit.
It makes men rich in greatest poverty,
Makes water wine, turns wooden cups to gold,
The homely whistle to sweet music's strain.
Seldom it comes ; to few from Heaven sent—
That much in little, all in nought, Content.

Both Gibbons and Byrd by disposition preferred the severe subject to the conventional Elizabethan conceit, though both wrote superb examples of the latter—Gibbons with his *Dainty, fine bird* and *Ah, dear heart*, and Byrd with *Though Amaryllis dance in green* and *This sweet and merry month of May*, among several others. Nothing could well surpass this beautiful elegy of Gibbons, the authorship of which is unfortunately not known :

Nay let me weep though other's tears be spent ;
Though all eyes dried be, let mine be wet.
Unto thy grave I'll pay this yearly rent,
Thy lifeless corse demands of me this debt.
I owe more tears than ever corse did crave ;
I'll pay more tears than e'er was paid to grave.

Ne'er let the sun with his deceiving light
  Seek to make glad these watery eyes of mine.
My sorrow suits with melancholy night;
  I joy in dole, in languishment I pine.
My dearest friend is set; he was my sun
With whom my mirth, my joy, and all, is done.

Yet if that Age had frosted o'er his head,
  Or if his face had furrowed been with years,
I would not so bemoan that he is dead;
  I might have been more niggard of my tears.
But O, the sun, new-rose, is gone to bed
And lilies in their spring-time hang their head.

Several fine examples of the ethical type of madrigal are to be found in Byrd's three sets:

Retire, my soul, consider thine estate,
  And justly sum thy lavish sin's account,
Time's dear expense and costly pleasure's rate;
  How follies grow, how vanities amount.
Write all these down in pale Death's reckoning tables
Thy days will seem but dreams, thy hopes but fables.

Byrd also wrote a number of very fine madrigals which are semi-religious in character; a few works of a similar mood occur in the sets of other madrigalists, but in this particular class Byrd easily excelled the rest. Among his finest pieces is:

Why do I use my paper, ink and pen
  And call my wits to counsel what to say?
Such memories were made for mortal men;
  I speak of saints whose names cannot decay.
An angel's trump were fitter for to sound
Their glorious death, if such on earth were found.

There are three stanzas in the part-books, but only the first is set with the music. The complete poem has as many as thirty stanzas; it was written by Henry Walpole as 'An Epitaph of the Life and Death of the most famous Clerk and virtuous Priest Edmund Campion'.

One other type must be mentioned, and it may best be described as a sad or mournful song. Such are Byrd's *Come, woeful Orpheus*, and *O Care, thou wilt despatch me* by Weelkes, the latter treated with such superb imagination and marked by such original harmony that it is considered by many to be the finest secular composition in the whole range of sixteenth-century music.

Enough has been said to show the importance of the more serious class of madrigals in a survey of the work of the English school as a whole; those who ignore it, or confine their taste exclusively to the gay madrigals, are clearly attaching to the word a meaning which was not present in the minds of the Elizabethan composers themselves. In their gay moods they certainly expressed themselves with matchless brilliance, but it was their superlative work in all styles and all varieties of subject that marks the outstanding excellence of this wonderful group of the English madrigal school.

4

The Composers

Richard Alison

Of Alison, one of the minor lights among the English madrigalists, nothing at all is known by way of personal history except that he was a Londoner, living at one time in a 'house in the Duke's place neere Alde-gate'. This fact is stated on the title-page of his *Psalmes of David*, published in 1599. His madrigal writings are contained in a volume published in 1606, under the title of *An Houres Recreation in Musicke, apt for Instrumentes and Voyces. Framed for the delight of Gentlemen and others which are wel affected to that qualitie, All for the most part with two trebles, necessarie for such as teach in priuate*

families, with a prayer for the long preseruation of the King and his posteritie, and a thankesgiuing for the deliuerance of the whole estate from the late conspiracie. It was dedicated to Sir John Scudamore.

Alison's style is more homophonic than that of any other of the English madrigalists, and his music is not of first-rate interest, though his choice of words was uniformly good. There is a curious bugle-call in *Though Wit bids Will to blow retreat* which may have been founded on a recognized call of the time. *Behold now praise the Lord*, an anthem included in this set, is on a far higher plane than anything else in the book. A few more compositions of Alison's survive in manuscript. Although flourishing at the time, he made no contribution to *The Triumphes of Oriana*. Alison wrote a short poem in praise of Farnaby which was printed in that composer's book of canzonets.

Thomas Bateson

Bateson was born about the year 1570, though the exact date is not known. In 1599 he was appointed organist of Chester Cathedral, and lived and worked there for nine years; his house stood at the top of the North Cloisters, and was one of those which were reconstructed at the dissolution from the monks' dormitory, but no trace of it is now left. Bateson left Chester in 1608, when he became organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, then known as the Cathedral of the Blessed Trinity. The rest of his life was spent in Dublin, and he died there in 1630. He took the degree of B.Mus. at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1615.

Bateson has enjoyed a great reputation as a madrigal writer, yet his work is not quite on the same level as that of Wilbye and Weelkes. But Bateson wrote many very fine madrigals, and he chose his words wisely as a rule. *Cupid in a bed of roses*

is one of his best works; it is a very picturesque madrigal with many realistic touches which reveal the hand of a true artist. *Sister, awake* has always been a favourite, and deserves to retain its popularity. *Hark! hear you not?* is another general favourite; and *Come, follow me, fair nymphs*, with its hunting metaphors, is a very effective madrigal for three voices. Bateson made some interesting harmonic experiments, examples of which are quoted in the author's *English Madrigal Composers*. His contribution to *The Triumphes of Oriana* arrived too late for inclusion in that collection, but that madrigal and *Orianaes farewell* were published in his first set.

Bateson's *First Set of English Madrigals to* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *voices* was published in 1604, with a dedication to Sir William Norres, and contains twenty-nine madrigals. His *Second Set of Madrigales to* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *Parts: Apt for Viols and Voyces* was published in 1618. It was dedicated to Arthur, Lord Chichester, and contains thirty madrigals.

John Bennet

Nothing is known of this composer's personal history. He dedicated his *Madrigalls to Foure Voyces* in 1599 to Ralph Assheton, of Downhams in Cheshire, a property still owned by this family, stating in his dedication that Assheton was 'many waies a principall patron of my good'; this may imply that he was in his service, or at least that he lived in the same locality. Bennet wrote one of the most effective of all the madrigals in *The Triumphes of Oriana*; more homophonic than the rest, it is yet very brilliant and gay, with some subtle touches of realism. His four-part madrigals are all of a quiet character, delicate and charming; *Come, shepherds, follow me* and the well-known *Weep, O mine eyes* are typical of his work. There are seventeen madrigals in the set.

Bennet also contributed in 1614 six numbers to Thomas

Ravenscroft's *A Briefe Discourse of the true (but neglected) use of Charact'ring the Degrees . . . in Measurable Musicke . . . Examples whereof are exprest in the Harmony of* 4. *Voyces, Concerning the Pleasure of* 5. *usuall Recreations.* 1. *Hunting,* 2. *Hawking,* 3. *Dauncing,* 4. *Drinking,* 5. *Enamouring.* Only two of these are strictly madrigalian in style; of these the *Falconer's song* is fresh and vigorous, and the little *Elves' Dance* is perfect in its daintiness and delicacy.

William Byrd

Byrd was the outstanding figure in the great group of Elizabethan musicians, and indeed takes a high place among the world's composers. It is the versatility of Byrd's genius that so especially marks him out, for he excelled in every branch of composition known in his time. His Latin church music stands with that of Palestrina as representing the high-water mark of excellence in the polyphonic style. In this department alone Byrd is represented by three masses and considerably more than two hundred motets that have survived to the present day. The masses and a great part of the motets were printed in his lifetime, but more than fifty motets survive in manuscript. His work for the English rites of the Church is almost as remarkable, including two morning services, together with *Venite*, *Kyrie*, and *Creed*, and four evening services, besides nearly a hundred anthems. The 'Great' service is of equal merit with the masses, and must be ranked as the finest English service that exists. Only a small proportion of Byrd's English church music was printed in his time.

Byrd was also a great pioneer in writing for keyboard instruments and for strings.

As a madrigal composer Byrd has been much misunderstood

and his work undervalued, partly because he only wrote a small number of madrigals in a light vein, and partly also because musicians from soon after Byrd's day until our own have tended to limit their taste for madrigals to those of a bright character; thus the serious madrigals, of which Byrd wrote so many fine examples, have remained until recently neglected by singers and unknown to critics. Perhaps the finest of Byrd's serious madrigals is *Why do I use my paper, ink, and pen?* a madrigal characterized by great dignity, which works up to a splendid climax. *Retire, my soul* is another fine work of this class; and of rather different character is the beautiful elegy, *Come to me, grief, for ever*. But Byrd also excelled in the more conventional kind of madrigal; the six-part setting of *This sweet and merry month of May* is as brilliant as anything in *The Triumphes of Oriana*, and although Byrd made no contribution to that collection, this madrigal may, in a sense, be regarded as his tribute to the praise of Elizabeth, or 'Oriana'. *Though Amaryllis dance in green* is another very fine madrigal dealing with a conventional Elizabethan conceit; Byrd's style is here in marked contrast to that of any of the other English madrigalists, but the true madrigalian spirit characterizes every bar of the music. *Come, woeful Orpheus* represents in Byrd's work that type of madrigal of which Wilbye, for instance, wrote several—that which deals with the subject of disappointed love. And in the lightest manner there are such things as *I thought that Love had been a boy*, *Come, jolly swains*, and some others which prove the falsity of the assertion that Byrd could not excel in the light vein. It is true that, being a man of austere disposition, he preferred to express himself seriously, but that is not to say that he failed in other subjects.

Some of the madrigals in the 1588 set were, as Byrd informs us in the prefatory 'Epistle to the Reader', 'originally made

for Instruments to expresse the harmonie, and one voyce to pronounce the dittie'. These were, therefore, some of the very earliest experiments in 'Art-song', an experiment which was brought to perfection by Byrd in his lovely cradle song, *My little sweet darling.*

Byrd's madrigals were published in three sets, each of which contained a certain proportion of church music. The first of these was published in 1588, and entitled: *Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs of Sadnes and Pietie, made into Musicke of fine parts . . . for the recreation of all such as delight in Musicke.* There followed in 1589, *Songs of sundrie natures, some of grauitie, and others of myrth, fit for all companies and voyces. Lately made and composed into Musicke of* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *parts, and published for the delight of all such as take pleasure in the exercise of that Art.* The last set was not published until 1611; it was entitled: *Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets: some solemne, others joyfull, framed to the life of the words: Fit for Voyces or Viols of* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *Parts.* Byrd's patrons for these publications were Sir Christopher Hatton, Henry Lord Hunsdon, and Francis Earl of Cumberland; there is a total of a hundred and fourteen compositions in the three sets.

Byrd was born in 1543. He was a pupil of Tallis and became organist of Lincoln Cathedral in February 1562-3, when he was scarcely twenty years old. In 1569 he was appointed a gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and he left Lincoln in 1572. Shortly after this he went to live at Harlington, near Uxbridge, and in 1593 moved to Stondon Place, near Ongar in Essex, where he spent the rest of his life. He died on July 4th, 1623, and was buried in Stondon churchyard. He married while at Lincoln and had four children. His wife predeceased him and was buried at Stondon. His property passed to his daughter-in-law, widow of his son Christopher, and then to his grandson Thomas.

Richard Carlton

Carlton seems to have been born about the year 1558; he took the degree of B.A. at Clare College, Cambridge, in 1577. He was subsequently ordained and became a minor canon of Norwich Cathedral, holding at the same time the office of master of the choristers. He was also vicar of St. Stephen's, Norwich, and later he held the living of Bawsey-cum-Glosthorp in Norfolk. His interests were centred in Norfolk, for the patron to whom he dedicated his *Madrigals to Five voyces* was a Norfolk gentleman named Thomas Farmer, and his madrigals include an elegy in memory of Sir John Shelton, the head of an old Norfolk family. The date of Carlton's death is not known, but it will be noticed that he was well into middle-age when his volume of madrigals was published in 1601. This may account for a certain peculiarity in his style which shows in a marked degree the influence of modal training, and in this detail it is unlike the work of any other of the English madrigalists. The frequent simultaneous use of the major and minor third are reminiscent of Byrd.

There are twenty-one madrigals in Carlton's set, and he also contributed to *The Triumphes of Oriana*.

Michael Cavendish

Born about the year 1565, Cavendish was the third and youngest son of William Cavendish of the manor of Cavendish Overhall in Suffolk; his grandfather was George Cavendish, the faithful adherent of Cardinal Wolsey. Lady Arabella Stuart, to whom he dedicated his volume of Airs and Madrigals, was his cousin. This elder branch of the Cavendish family became extinct; the younger branch is now represented by the Duke of Devonshire.

Of Cavendish's Airs and Madrigals only one copy, that in

STONDON CHURCH

William Byrd was buried in the churchyard, see page 85

the British Museum, is known to exist, and it was only recently brought to light. The title-page is badly damaged and the exact title remains unknown. There are eight madrigals and twenty 'Ayres', or lute-songs, in the book. Among the madrigals is *Come, gentle swains*, which has the refrain of the Oriana madrigals; it is the only madrigal in *The Triumphes of Oriana* which had been previously printed, for Cavendish's book was published in 1598. The madrigal was re-written for the *Triumphs*. The most distinctive madrigal of these eight is *Wandering in this place*.

William Cobbold

Cobbold was born in Norwich in 1560 and became organist of Norwich Cathedral in 1599. Nine years later he resigned this office and became a lay-clerk, retaining this position until his death in 1639. He expressed a desire to be buried in Norwich Cathedral, where his wife and his son Francis already lay, but for some reason which remains unknown he was buried at Beccles. Cobbold's five-part madrigal, *With wreaths of rose and laurel*, was included in *The Triumphes of Oriana*. A few other madrigalian compositions by Cobbold survive in manuscript, but he published no complete set.

Michael East

East, or, as his name was variously spelt, Easte, Est, and Este, is generally thought to have been a son of Thomas East, the printer, who was responsible for producing so many of the madrigal part-books. But little is known of his personal history. The date of his birth may be conjectured at about 1580, and he was perhaps little more than a youth when his madrigal, *Hence stars! too dim of light*, was written for *The Triumphes of Oriana*. This madrigal was printed again with a few slight alterations in his second book of madrigals. East

held the degree of B.Mus., and for many years was organist of Lichfield Cathedral. He died probably about the year 1640.

A prolific composer, he published as many as seven sets of books, but only two of these were exclusively madrigalian. The first set, published in 1604, was entitled *Madrigales to* 3. 4. *and* 5. *parts : apt for Viols and voices.* It was dedicated to Sir John Crofts, and contains twenty-four madrigals. Among these is a setting of Breton's lyric, *In the merry month of May*, which, as stated in a previous chapter, may have been sung before Queen Elizabeth during her visit to Elvetham. The *Second set of Madrigales to* 3. 4. *and* 5. *parts : apt for Viols and voices* followed in 1606, containing twenty-two madrigals, and among them is the popular *How merrily we live.* The words of the second book fall short of the standard of the first book, but both books consist exclusively of conventional conceits such as were in vogue at that date. East's second patron was Sir Thomas Gerard. The *Third Set of Bookes : Wherein are Pastorals, Anthemes, Neopolitanes, Fancies, and Madrigales, to* 5. *and* 6. *parts : Apt both for Viols and Voyces* was published in 1610. It contains only seven strictly madrigalian compositions. The *Fourth Set of Bookes, Wherein are Anthemes . . . Madrigals, and Songs of other kindes to* 4. 5. *and* 6. *Parts : Apt for Viols and Voyces* bears the date 1619. There are sixteen madrigals in this set. The beautiful rhythm of *Fly away, Care*, which is to be found here, has already been referred to. The patrons of these two books were Henry Willoughby of Risley, co. Derby, and Robert Earl of Essex. East's last three sets of books contain no madrigals.

John Farmer

Farmer was probably born about the year 1565 ; the earliest known fact about him is that he published a short musical treatise in 1591. In 1592 he was a contributor to East's

Whole Booke of Psalmes. He became organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, in 1595, but his career there was far from satisfactory, and he seems to have left Dublin finally in 1599 or shortly afterwards. He is believed to have died in London about the year 1605. His *First Set of English Madrigals : to Foure Voices* was published in 1599. It was dedicated to that patron of the Arts, Edward Earl of Oxford, and contains seventeen numbers, the last of which is one of the very few English madrigals written for eight voices. There is great charm in Farmer's work ; *Fair Phyllis I saw sitting all alone* is a perfect little madrigal, in which there are some characteristic touches of realism. His contribution to *The Triumphes of Oriana* was the six-part madrigal, *Fair nymph, I heard one telling*.

Giles Farnaby

Farnaby, it may be conjectured, was born about the year 1560 ; his marriage is recorded in the registers of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, in 1587, and he took the B.Mus. degree at Oxford in 1592. His *Canzonets to Foure voyces with a Song of eight parts* were published in 1598 ; there are seventeen pieces in the set, which is dedicated to 'Maister Ferdinando Heaburn, groome of her Maiesties priuie chamber'. No fewer than four small laudatory poems were printed at the beginning of the canzonets, one by Anthony Holborne in Latin elegiacs and the other three by John Dowland, the famous lutenist, Richard Alison, the madrigalist, and Hubert Holland. It may be judged that Farnaby was held in high esteem, and the fact that he was not a contributor to *The Triumphes of Oriana* seems to point to his having died about the year 1600. As a writer for the virginals his work was of a very high standard, ranking second only to that of Byrd. Farnaby's canzonets are very similar in calibre to the madrigals of Bennet and Farmer. The most interesting number is *Construe my meaning*, the harmony

of which is unusually chromatic and original, and *Some time she would* is another attractive work. Much of Farnaby's writing is complex and difficult to sing with good effect; yet several of the canzonets well repay careful study.

Ellis Gibbons

Ellis Gibbons, an elder brother of the more famous Orlando, was son of William Gibbons of Cambridge, a member of the town Waits, and was born at Cambridge in 1573. He died in May 1603, leaving a widow but no children. The traditional statement that he was organist of Salisbury is entirely disproved by the account books of the 'Clerk of Fabrick' as well as the Chapter Act Books. Nor is his name to be found in the Cathedral Registers. John Farrant, succeeding Richard Fuller in 1598, was Cathedral organist till 1615. Ellis Gibbons occupies a unique position among the contributors to *The Triumphes of Oriana*, for he alone, with the exception of Morley who compiled the work, contributed two madrigals. *Long live fair Oriana* is for five voices, and *Round about her charret* is for six. The old English word *charret*, or *charet*, was in general use at this date, *chariot* being a later use; but until the nineteenth century *chariot* was pronounced in two syllables.

Orlando Gibbons

Orlando Gibbons was born at Cambridge in 1583 and baptized at Oxford in the same year. His eldest brother Edward was at one time Master of the Choristers at King's College, Cambridge, and Orlando became a chorister under him in 1596. Edward is stated by Boyce, following Wood and others, to have been Minor Canon and Precentor of Bristol Cathedral, but the cathedral records, which cover this period with complete detail, contain no record whatever of his name. In 1604 Orlando became organist of the Chapel Royal, and in

1606 took the B.Mus. degree at Cambridge. In 1623 he was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey. In 1625 all the members of the Chapel Royal choir, and Gibbons among them,[1] were summoned to attend the meeting of Charles I with his Queen at Canterbury, the marriage having already taken place in Paris when Charles was represented by proxy. During this visit Gibbons was attacked by apoplexy, and died on June 5th. He was buried in the cathedral, and a mural tablet, surmounted by his bust, was erected to his memory. His son Christopher was a musician of some note; he was successively organist of Winchester Cathedral, the Chapel Royal, and Westminster Abbey.

As a composer of church music, Gibbons stands very high among the Tudor School, to which by his style he properly belongs, although he was scarcely more than a youth at the date of Elizabeth's death. But with his church music we are not primarily concerned here, nor yet with his instrumental compositions. As a madrigalist he is among the greatest of the English School. His style was severe, and in general temperament he must have closely resembled Byrd. His finest madrigal, without question, is *What is our life?* the words of which are almost certainly by Sir Walter Raleigh; in its own kind no madrigal can be said to surpass it. *The silver swan* is very different, but for beauty it also stands almost alone in its own class; in structure it approaches very closely to the 'Ayre' of the lutenists, and it could with very little adaptation be sung as a solo-song. *Ah, dear heart* and *Dainty*

[1] Historians have sometimes recorded this incident in terms that suggest that Gibbons alone was chosen for the special honour of carrying out the musical arrangements of the wedding. An entry in the Chapter Acts of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, records the granting leave of absence for a fortnight to Nathaniel Giles, the organist, to attend the ceremonies at Canterbury with the rest of the gentlemen of the Chapel Royal.

fine bird are of another kind again, and of great beauty and finish. The gay type of madrigal seems to have had no attraction for Gibbons. His *First Set of Madrigals and Mottets of 5. Parts : apt for Viols and Voyces* was published in 1612 ; it contains twenty compositions, and was dedicated to the younger Sir Christopher Hatton, in whose house Gibbons states 'they were most of them composed'. The dedication address tells us that Hatton 'provided the language they (the madrigals) speake', and this seems to imply that he selected the words rather than wrote them, seeing that in eight cases out of the twenty the authorship can be identified, and includes the names of Sylvester, Spenser, Raleigh, and Donne. The opening words of the dedicatory address, from the pen of Orlando Gibbons, deserve to be written in gold in every school and college of music or Art : *It is proportion that beautifies everything.*

Thomas Greaves

Nothing is known of the personal history of this composer except that he was lutenist to Sir Henry Pierpoint, to whom he dedicated his *Songes of sundrie kindes* in 1604. Lady Pierpoint was Frances Cavendish, sister of Sir Charles, Wilbye's patron, and cousin of Michael Cavendish the composer. There is a curious similarity in the general character and make-up of the song-books of Cavendish and Greaves ; both are in folio, and both contain a mixture of lute-songs and madrigals. There are six madrigals in Greaves's book, and much the best of these is *Come away, sweet love, and play thee.*

John Hilton (the elder)

Recent research has proved beyond doubt that there were two composers of this name. Mr. Arkwright has rightly treated them separately in the second edition of Grove's

Dictionary of Music and Musicians, but the notice in the *Dictionary of National Biography* is in error on this point, although the writer of that notice seems to have been puzzled by some of the dates. In an early seventeenth-century manuscript his six-part anthem, *Call to remembrance*, is described in the part-books as being by 'John Hilton senior'. Hilton was probably born about the year 1560, or perhaps a little earlier; he was for some years a lay-clerk of Lincoln Cathedral and became organist of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1594. It would seem that he died in 1612, the year in which his successor, George Mason, was appointed. He contributed the madrigal *Fair Oriana, Beauty's Queen* to *The Triumphes of Oriana*. In early manuscripts the anthem, *Lord, for thy tender mercies' sake*, is generally ascribed to him, and there seems to be very little reason to dispute his authorship. He also wrote other church music.

John Hilton (the younger)

Hilton was born in 1599, and was almost certainly the son of the organist of Trinity. He took the B.Mus. degree at Cambridge in 1626. In the later years of his life he was organist and parish clerk of St. Margaret's, Westminster, in which church he was buried. He died in 1657. In 1627 he published a set of *Ayres, or, Fa las for Three Voyces*. There are twenty-six of these, but few of them are of much merit. The Ayres were dedicated to Dr. William Heather. In 1652 Hilton published a collection of catches and rounds under the title of *Catch as catch can*.

William Holborne

William was brother of Anthony Holborne, who in 1597 published a book entitled *The Cittharn Schoole*. At the end of this were added *sixe short Aers Neapolitan like to three voyces, without the Instrument*, by William Holborne. The

preface states that they were published because 'incorrect and unauthorized coppies are got about'. They are, however, very slight, little pieces. Nothing is known concerning William Holborne's biography. *The Cittharn Schoole* was dedicated to Thomas, Lord Burgh.

John Holmes

John Holmes was organist of Winchester Cathedral at the time when he contributed his madrigal, *Thus Bonny-boots the birthday celebrated* to *The Triumphes of Oriana*. He would thus have been a near neighbour of Weelkes when the latter was organist of Winchester College, and both left Winchester in the same year, 1602, Weelkes for Chichester and Holmes for Salisbury. Holmes succeeded John Farrant as organist of Salisbury, and held the post till his death in 1638. He wrote a good deal of church music, much of which was included by his pupil, Adrian Batten, in his autograph organ-book, now at St. Michael's College, Tenbury. There were two other contemporary composers of the name of Holmes.

Thomas Hunt

Hunt wrote the six-part madrigal, *Hark! did ye ever hear?* for *The Triumphes of Oriana*. Nothing is known of his personal history, but it is possible that he was organist of Wells Cathedral. He wrote some church music, among which is a complete morning and evening service for four voices, including Responses, *Venite*, *Kyrie*, and *Creed*. A contemporary manuscript of this service, believed to be in Hunt's autograph, is in the library of St. Michael's College, Tenbury.

Edward Johnson

Edward Johnson is mentioned in the Hengrave manuscripts as having been in the service of the Kytsons at Hengrave Hall.

It is possible, therefore, that he may have been a relative of Robert Johnson and succeeded him. One Robert Johnson was certainly the household musician there in 1572–5, though the Hengrave Robert cannot possibly be identified with Robert Johnson the lutenist and composer who was flourishing at the end of the reign of James I and during that of Charles I. This Robert was son of John Johnson, one of Queen Elizabeth's lutenists, 1581 95. 'Robert Johnson, priest', an earlier sixteenth-century composer, makes the third musician of this name, besides John and Edward; and that there should be some confusion is not surprising. Edward Johnson composed a six-part madrigal, *Come, blessed bird* for *The Triumphes of Oriana*. The dates of his birth and death are unknown, but he took the B.Mus. degree at Cambridge in 1594, and was a contributor to East's *Whole Booke of Psalmes* in 1592. It is possible that on leaving Hengrave he became household musician to Lord Hertford, because his settings of *Eliza is the fairest Queen* and *Come again* are almost certainly those written for the visit of the Queen to Lord Hertford at Elvetham, described in an earlier chapter. In Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (1598).[1] Edward Johnson is named as one of the leading English composers.

Robert Jones

Jones, a composer of considerable importance, is always reputed to have been a fine performer on the lute. The large majority of his compositions were lute-songs, of which there are extant five books containing in all over one hundred 'Ayres' or songs. But Jones was also a madrigal composer. His *First Set of Madrigals, of* 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. *Parts, for Viols and Voices, or for Voices alone: or as you please*, was published in 1607; it contains twenty-six madrigals, and was dedicated to Robert,

[1] See Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians.*

Earl of Salisbury. The words of the four-part numbers and of the first three of the five-part, deal with bird subjects; but Jones was fond of good words both for his madrigals and for his lute-songs, and this set includes lyrics by Francis Davison and Campian. The last two numbers form one whole, but the first section is for seven voices and the second for eight; this is one of the very few examples of an English madrigal for more than six voices. Unfortunately, no complete copy of Jones's set of madrigals is known to exist to-day. The author wishes here to correct a statement made by him in his *English Madrigal Composers* on information derived from a credible source, but which could not be verified owing to the conditions prevailing during the war and for some time after it. There is no complete copy of the printed set in the Royal Library at Brussels, but seven of the madrigals are to be found there in manuscript part-books of an early date, copied with evident care from the original printed books. The Cantus and Bassus books of the set are in the British Museum, and the two final numbers are complete in manuscript part-books in the Bodleian Library.[1] Jones was evidently a Welshman, for, apart from his name, the use of *leri deri dan* as an alternative for *fa-la-la* is distinctively Welsh. Morley appears to have chosen several cathedral organists to contribute to *The Triumphes of Oriana*, and it is possible that Jones was organist of one of the Welsh cathedrals. His contribution to the *Triumphs* was *Fair Oriana, seeming to wink at folly*. As a madrigal writer he is by no means in the same rank with the great ones of the English School, yet his work provides ample evidence that he could write more serious music with real ability as well as the lighter lute-song. He took the B.Mus. degree at Oxford in 1597.

[1] Bodl. MSS. Mus. f. 25–8.

George Kirbye

The date of Kirbye's birth is not precisely known. He was a contributor to East's *Whole Booke of Psalmes* in 1592, and he may have been at least five-and-twenty years old at that date. He became household musician to Sir Robert Jermyn at Rushbrooke Hall in Suffolk. In later life he lived in Whiting Street, Bury St. Edmunds. Here he died in 1634, and was buried in St. Mary's Church, where for some years he served as churchwarden. In 1597 he published his *First set of English Madrigalls, to* 4. 5. *&* 6. *voyces*. The set contained twenty-four madrigals, and was dedicated to Jermyn's two daughters, Anne and Frances. The most beautiful of Kirbye's madrigals is perhaps the six-part setting of *Sleep now, my Muse*. His madrigals were highly praised by Burney, who regarded him as one of the best of the English composers; but he remained almost wholly unknown, except by his Oriana madrigal, until Mr. Arkwright published his whole set. Certain harmonic peculiarities characterize his work; like Byrd, he sometimes introduced a type of dissonance which may seem to modern ears to be harsh and jarring, and some of his harmonic experiments are interesting and original. There are two versions of the words of the madrigal which he wrote for *The Triumphes of Oriana*, though the music is identical in both cases. This curious fact points to there having been two editions of the *Triumphs*, both published in 1601.

Henry Lichfild

Nothing is known of the personal history of Lichfild except that his *First Set of Madrigals of* 5. *Parts: apt both for Viols and Voyces*, published in 1613, was dedicated to Lady Cheyney, or Cheney, of Toddington (pronounced Tuddington), near Luton. Lady Cheney was the widow of Lord Cheney, who

was one of the Peers at the trial of Mary Queen of Scots, and Lichfild was in her service in some capacity. At her death in 1614 she left a legacy to Lichfild. There are twenty madrigals in this set; they are smoothly written and pleasant to sing, although none of them are of outstanding excellence. *I always loved to call my lady Rose* is typically madrigalian, and *Injurious hours* has some touches of realism of a conventional kind.

John Lisley

Lisley wrote the six-part madrigal, *Fair Cytherea presents her doves* for *The Triumphes of Oriana*. Nothing else whatever is known about him.

George Marson

Marson contributed *The nymphs and shepherds danced* to *The Triumphes of Oriana*. He was born about 1570, and became organist of Canterbury Cathedral in 1597 or 1598, where he remained till his death on February 5th, 1631–2. The cathedral burial register states that he was formerly one of the minor canons. He married at Canterbury in 1599. Some anthems and a Service, with *Preces*, are in the Barnard MSS. in the Royal College of Music.

John Milton

Milton was father of the poet. He was the son of Richard Milton of Stanton St. John, near Oxford, and was educated at Christ Church. He was born about 1563. After leaving Oxford he was disinherited by his father on account of his religious views, and had a hard struggle for life, working in London as a scrivener. He wrote four anthems for Leighton's *Teares or Lamentacions of a Sorrowfull Soule*. For *The Triumphes of Oriana* he wrote the six-part madrigal, *Fair Orian in the morn*. He died in 1647, and was buried at St. Giles, Cripplegate.

Thomas Morley

Morley was without doubt the leading personality of the English School of madrigal composers. He was born in 1558. In 1588 he took the B.Mus. degree at Oxford, and was at the time organist of St. Giles, Cripplegate. Very shortly afterwards he became organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, and in 1592 was appointed to the Chapel Royal. During his later years he was living at a house in the parish of Little St. Helens. He resigned his office in the Chapel Royal in the autumn of 1602, and died in the following year.

In 1593 he published his *Canzonets or Little short songs to three voyces*. This set followed an old convention in being for three voices, but the style, in marked contrast to the work of Cornish and the other English pioneers, was absolutely modern and of its own date. There are twenty-four numbers in this set, which was dedicated to Mary, Countess of Pembroke, Sidney's sister. These canzonets are all of a bright kind, and include the characteristic *Good morrow, sweet ladies of the May*, the brilliant *Arise, get up, my dear*, and the little ballet, *Though Philomela lost her love*. In 1594 there followed *Madrigalls to Four Voyces newly published by Thomas Morley the First Booke*. The first edition contained twenty madrigals, but two more were added in the second edition of 1600. The set is unique among this class of Elizabethan publications in not being dedicated to any patron; it was the earliest English set to bear the title of *Madrigals*. The wonderful Morris-dance madrigal, *Ho! who comes here?* is in this set, and also the popular little *April is in my mistress' face*. *The First Booke of Balletts to Five Voyces*, published in 1595 under the patronage of Sir Robert Cecil, afterwards Lord Salisbury, was the earliest set of English ballets; there are twenty-one numbers in the set,

and among them *Now is the month of Maying*, which is probably the best-known piece in the entire English Madrigal School. The last composition in the set is written in dialogue form for two choirs. In the same year Morley's *First booke of Canzonets to two Voices* was published and dedicated to Lady Periam. These lovely little canzonets are unlike anything else in the English Madrigal School, and perhaps display Morley's genius better than any of his other works. Nine instrumental fantasies were included with the twelve canzonets.

Morley's fifth madrigalian set was entitled *Canzonets or Little short Aers to five and sixe Voices*. It was published in 1597 and dedicated to George, Lord Hunsdon. The beautiful *O grief! even on the bud; I follow, lo, the footing*, and *Hark! Alleluia* are among the twenty-one compositions in this book. Apart from his original work Morley edited two sets of Italian madrigals adapted to English words, and in 1601 he issued the famous set of *Madrigales, The Triumphes of Oriana to 5. and 6. voices composed by divers severall auethors*. The work was dedicated to Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham; it contained twenty-five madrigals by twenty-three English composers, including the editor, and each one ended with the same refrain in praise of Queen Elizabeth as personified in Oriana.

Some of Morley's five-voice canzonets were adapted by him as solo-songs with lute accompaniment, but he also published a distinct set of lute-songs in 1600; only one copy of this set is known, and it is now in the possession of an American collector. In addition to his vocal publications he produced in 1599 his *First Booke of Consort Lessons made by divers exquisite Authors for sixe Instruments to play together*, and in 1597 was published his famous treatise, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*.

John Mundy

John Mundy was son of William Mundy, who was also a composer of considerable distinction. John was born about 1560, and became organist of Eton College in 1585; shortly afterwards he held a similar appointment at St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. He died at Windsor in 1630 and was buried in the Cloisters.

As a madrigalist he was early in the field, for in 1594 he published a set of *Songs and Psalmes composed into* 3. 4. *and* 5. *parts, for the use and delight of all such as either love or learne Musicke.* This was the next year after Morley published his first set, and Byrd and Morley were alone before him. Mundy's patron was Robert, Earl of Essex. There are thirteen actual madrigals in the set and several of them are distinctive and attractive, notably *Were I a king; My prime of youth*, and *Heigh ho! 'chill go to plough no more.* Mundy contributed the madrigal *Lightly she whipped o'er the dales* to *The Triumphes of Oriana.* He wrote a good deal of church music, but the early manuscripts freely confuse the work of the father and son.

Richard Nicholson

Nicholson was born about 1570. He became organist of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1595, and remained there until his death in 1639. He held a musical lectureship in Oxford founded by Dr. Heather in 1626. He was represented in *The Triumphes of Oriana* by his five-part madrigal, *Sing, shepherds all.* Several of his madrigals and some church music survive in manuscript.

Daniel Norcome

Norcome, or Nurcombe, as the name is spelt in the Windsor registers, was a minor canon of St. George's Chapel in Windsor

Castle, where his father, John, was a lay-clerk. Daniel was born in 1576. He died before 1626. He contributed the five-part madrigal *With angel's face and brightness* to *The Triumphes of Oriana.*

Nathaniel Pattrick

Songes of Sundrye Natures whereof some ar Divine, some are Madrigalles and the rest Psalmes and Hymnes in Latin composed for 5. and 6. voyces and one for 8. voyces by Nathanaell Pattrick sometyme Master of the children of the Cathedrall Churche of Worcester and organist of the same was the title of a set of books entered at the Stationers' Hall in 1597. No copy is known to exist, and it is possible that the work was never published, especially as the composer died in 1595. The date of his birth is unknown, but he was certainly a young man at the time of his death. He was buried at St. Michael's, Worcester, and his widow married Thomas Tomkins, the famous madrigalist and composer of church music, who succeeded him as organist of Worcester Cathedral.

Francis Pilkington

Pilkington was born about the year 1562. He may have been connected with the Lancashire Pilkingtons, but there is no precise evidence on the point. He was ordained in 1614, and became a Minor Canon and Precentor of Chester Cathedral, having been formerly a lay-clerk. He was at the same time vicar of Holy Trinity in Chester. Pilkington would have been a contemporary of Bateson at the cathedral. He took the B.Mus. degree in 1595, and died in 1638. His *First Set of Madrigals and Pastorals of 3. 4. and 5. Parts* was published in 1614. It was dedicated to Sir Thomas Smith of Hough, co. Chester, and contained twenty-two madrigals. *The Second Set of Madrigals, and Pastorals, of 3. 4. 5. and 6. Parts: Apt*

for Violls and Voyces followed in 1624. It included twenty-seven compositions, twenty-three of which were madrigals. This set was dedicated to Sir Peter Leigh of Lyme. In style Pilkington follows Wilbye more nearly than any of the other English madrigalists; and although his work is manifestly inferior to Wilbye's, yet it often reaches a high level. *O softly-singing lute* is in the first rank. *Have I found her?* is another excellent madrigal built on smaller lines. *Care for thy soul*, a serious madrigal in the manner of Byrd, is a very remarkable piece of music; it must be remembered that it was published twenty-four years after Weelkes's *O Care, thou wilt despatch me*, yet in the light of the subsequent 250 years of musical history, Pilkington's chromatic writing in this composition stands out as a very notable bit of work. Pilkington was, perhaps, a little unfortunate in challenging comparison with Morley by setting some of the same words, notably *I follow, lo, the footing*, a type of madrigal of which Morley was a consummate master. *O praise the Lord* in the second set is a fine anthem.

Thomas Tomkins

Tomkins was one of the most distinguished of the English madrigalists, but the fact that he belonged to this great School has been obscured to some extent by the lateness of the date at which his music was printed. His church music, for example, was printed after his death, but much of it must have been written early in the seventeenth century and some of it earlier, for he was organist of Worcester Cathedral as early as 1596, and perhaps two years before that. In the same way some of his madrigals would have been written quite twenty years before they were published. Tomkins was born about 1573, his father being at that time a lay-clerk at St. David's Cathedral. He succeeded Nathaniel Pattrick as organist of Worcester

Cathedral and married his widow. He took the B.Mus. degree at Oxford in 1607. In 1621 he was appointed one of the organists of the Chapel Royal, but retained his position at Worcester. He lived to a great age and, dying in 1656, was buried at Martin Hassingtree in Worcestershire. With his church music we are not here primarily concerned, but it should be stated that he was one of the greatest of the English church musicians belonging to the polyphonic school.

The younger Thomas, and not his father, was the composer of the madrigal, *The fauns and satyrs tripping*, which was one of *The Triumphes of Oriana*. There are twenty-eight compositions in Tomkins's *Songs of* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *parts* published in 1622. The set was dedicated to William, Earl of Pembroke, but each number in the set has a separated dedication. Four of the numbers are set to scriptural words, and of these *David's lament for Absalom* is by far the finest—a beautiful and highly impassioned piece of music. *Weep no more, thou sorry boy* and *When I observe those beauty's wonderments* are two madrigals that can scarcely be matched by Wilbye or Weelkes. *Music divine* is another madrigal having a splendid sense of style and much originality of treatment; there is a fine effect in the quaver runs at the word *harmony* that was quite novel at this date.

Thomas Vautor

Vautor was born about 1590, or possibly a little earlier. The first fact known about him was that he took the B.Mus. degree at Oxford in 1616, and in 1619 he published his *First Set: Beeing Songs of divers Ayres and Natures, of Five and Sixe parts: Apt for Vyols and Voyces*. At that date he was domestic musician to Sir George Villiers, father of the famous Duke of Buckingham, to whom the book was dedicated. The date of his

death is unknown. Vautor's set consists of twenty-two compositions. He has a very distinct style of his own, and several madrigals in this set are very attractive. *Sweet Suffolk owl* is excellent, in style quite unlike the work of any other of the English composers, and in form particularly interesting. The three ballets at the beginning of the set are distinctive in character, and there is a fine swing in *Mother, I will have a husband*, which is more or less in rondo-form.

John Ward

Very little is known of the personal history of Ward. In 1613 he published his *First Set of English Madrigals to* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *parts apt both for Viols and Voyces. With a Mourning Song in memory of Prince Henry*. There are twenty-eight madrigals in the set, and it is dedicated to Sir Henry Fanshaw, in whose household Ward held office of some kind. In Batten's organ-book he is described as a 'gentleman', implying that he was an amateur rather than a professional musician. There is a small amount of his church music surviving in manuscript. As a madrigal writer Ward takes a very high place in the English School although, with the exception of *Die not, fond man*, his work has been almost entirely neglected until recently. The three- and four-voice madrigals in the set are pleasantly written without any very marked distinction. Most of the three-part numbers are suitable for female voices, and among these *My true love hath my heart* should be a favourite. But it is in his bigger works that Ward shows his true genius. A feature of his writing is his employment of double and even triple suspensions; some very massive and splendid effects are produced by this device, notably in *Out from the vale* and *If the deep sighs*. Other first-rate madrigals in this set are *Upon a bank of roses; O divine Love*, and *I have entreated*.

Ward was a man of fine taste and culture; the lyrics he chose provide good evidence of this, for four are by Sidney, four by Michael Drayton, two by Francis and one by Walter Davison, while several of the anonymous poems in the set are on quite as high a level.

Thomas Weelkes

The date of Weelkes's birth can only be approximately guessed at 1575, nor are the early facts of his life known. It is possible that he was a chorister at Winchester at either the cathedral or the college. The earliest known fact about him is that he was organist of Winchester College in the year 1597, lived in college during his tenure of office, and left for Chichester Cathedral in 1602. There he remained for the rest of his life. He took the B.Mus. degree at Oxford in 1602. He died near St. Bride's Church, London, on November 30th, 1623, while on a visit to a friend named Drinkwater, and he was buried at that church on the following day. He left a widow and children at Chichester. Weelkes is possibly the greatest madrigal-writer not only of the English School but of all nationalities. There are, however, many who will prefer the claims of the great stylist, John Wilbye; and the question of supremacy is, after all, of comparatively small moment. The genius of Weelkes is especially conspicuous in his boldness and originality in discovering new possibilities of harmonic usage, for he was one of the first to use chromatic chords freely; and these new harmonic devices enabled him the more readily to exercise his wonderfully fertile imagination and to express his ideas through the medium of his music. He was also able to write fine strong passages in terms of the simplest and purest harmony when occasion demanded it. Nothing is so remarkable in the whole realm of polyphonic music as *O care, thou*

wilt despatch me, not only because of the amazing harmonic treatment but also because it reveals the composer's poetic imagination expressing itself with a rare subtlety of touch. Examples of Weelkes's broad diatonic style are to be seen in *Like two proud armies* and *Mars in a fury*. In another style, *Take here my heart*, is a beautiful expression of tenderness, while a fine humour is shown in *Three virgin nymphs; The nightingale*, and many more. As a writer of ballets, too, Weelkes was supreme: *On the plains: Hark, all ye lovely saints*, and *Sing we at pleasure* cannot even be matched by Thomas Morley.

Weelkes was a prolific composer. His *Madrigals to* 3. 4. 5. *&* 6. *voyces* were published in 1597. It contained twenty-four numbers and was dedicated to George Phillpot. The *Balletts and Madrigals to five voyces, with one to* 6. *voyces* followed a year later. Edward Darcye was patron of this set, which also consisted of twenty-four numbers. The *Madrigals of* 5. *and* 6. *parts apt for the Viols and voices*, published in 1600, really consisted of two sets; for, although there was only one title-page, the five-part and six-part works were separated, and each section had a separate patron; the two patrons were Henry, Lord Windsor and George Brooke, and each section contained ten madrigals. This was the earliest example of the use of the phrase 'apt for viols or voices', which was used almost universally in the later sets of the madrigalists. Weelkes's remaining set was dedicated to Edward, Lord Denny; it was entitled *Ayeres or Phantasticke Spirites for three voices*. There were twenty-six pieces in this book, mostly of a light or satirical kind, but the final piece is a beautiful and highly imaginative elegy in remembrance of his friend, Thomas Morley. Weelkes contributed the well-known *As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending* to *The Triumphes of Oriana*.

Weelkes was a great church musician, a fact that has generally

been overlooked. Eight or nine services and nearly forty anthems by him are known to exist, although the text of none of the services has as yet been found complete. *Hosanna to the Son of David* is a magnificent specimen of broad and dignified writing in the polyphonic style.

John Wilbye

Wilbye was born at Diss in Norfolk in 1574. His father, Matthew Wilbye, was a tanner by trade but a keen amateur of music. As a child his gifts seem to have brought him to the notice of the family of Sir Thomas Cornwallis of Brome Hall and so to the Kytsons of Hengrave Hall, for Lady Kytson was a Cornwallis. About the year 1593 he was appointed household musician to the Kytsons, and he lived at Hengrave Hall until 1626. Sir Thomas Kytson died in 1602, but his widow maintained the establishment in full state until her death in 1626. Wilbye then retired to Colchester and lived at the house of his life-long friend Lady Rivers, whom he had known in childhood as Mary Kytson. The house is described in Morant's *History of Colchester* as the 'great brick-house' opposite the west end of Holy Trinity Church, and it is still standing. Here Wilbye died in 1638; he was buried in the adjoining church. In 1613 Lady Kytson had granted him the lease of the best sheep-farm in the district as a reward for faithful service, and at his death he left a considerable fortune.

Apart from his madrigals scarcely any music of Wilbye's has survived, and it is probable that he wrote but little church music; but fortunately he published two large sets of madrigals, and in this class of composition he reached the very highest levels. He and Weelkes, considered as madrigalists alone, stand without question at the head of the English School. Some will prefer one and some the other, but all will agree

on their joint supremacy. Wilbye lacked something of the daring originality of Weelkes, yet he was very far from being conventional, for he used chromatic harmonies freely in many of his madrigals, notably in *Happy, O, happy he* and *Oft have I vowed*, but no other composer treated the conventional Elizabethan conceit with such quite perfection of style and dignity as Wilbye. A noticeable feature of his music is the varied manner in which he scored his work, harbouring his resources and varying the 'colour' just as an orchestral composer does, repeating phrases with different groups of voices and holding others in reserve. A well-known example of this is to be seen in the popular *Sweet honey-sucking bees*, and again in *Stay, Corydon*, a beautifully scored work.

His *First Set of English Madrigals to* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *voices* was published in 1598, and the dedicatory address to Sir Charles Cavendish was dated from Austin Friars, where Kytson had his London house. There are thirty madrigals in the set. There were thirty-four numbers in the *Second Set of Madrigales to* 3. 4. 5. *and* 6. *parts apt both for Voyals and Voyces*. This was published in 1609 and dedicated to Lady Arabella Stuart. Both Wilbye's patrons were connected with the Kytson family, and were frequent visitors at Hengrave. *The Lady Oriana*, Wilbye's madrigal for *The Triumphes of Oriana*, is a fine specimen of his writing.

Henry Youll

Nothing whatever is known of the personal history of this composer except that he may have been in the service of one Edward Bacon, to whose three sons he dedicated his *Canzonets to Three Voyces*, published in 1608. There are twenty-four canzonets in this book, and many of them should become popular, for they are attractive and admirably vocal; some of

them, too, are quite distinctive in style. One of the best is a setting of Ben Jonson's *Slow, slow, fresh fount*, the music of which is well fitted to the words. *Pipe, shepherds, pipe* is gayer in character and full of charm. The last six in the set are ballets, and they are among the best things of their kind for three voices. Considering the excellent quality of Youll's work, it seems strange that he has been neglected so completely and that his name was almost unknown even in musical circles until this set of canzonets was published complete in the English Madrigal School Series.

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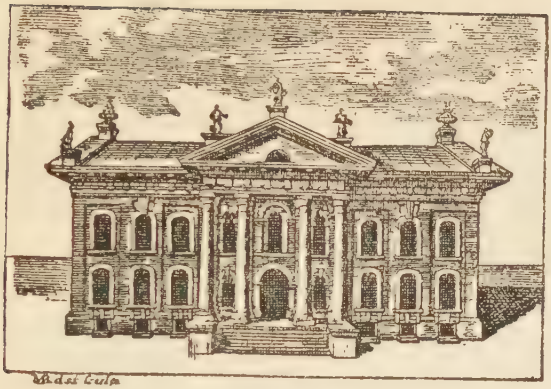

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